PLANTING IDEAS • BEAUTIFUL GARDENS • EXPERT ADVICE

GARDENS

ILLUSTRATED

How to plant for late-season COLOUR AND FORM

5 TIPS FOR LOW-MAINTENANCE BORDERS

DESIGN INSIGHTS

How to age your garden

Get creative with metal in the garden

Garlic

The best varieties to grow **PLUS** tasty recipes

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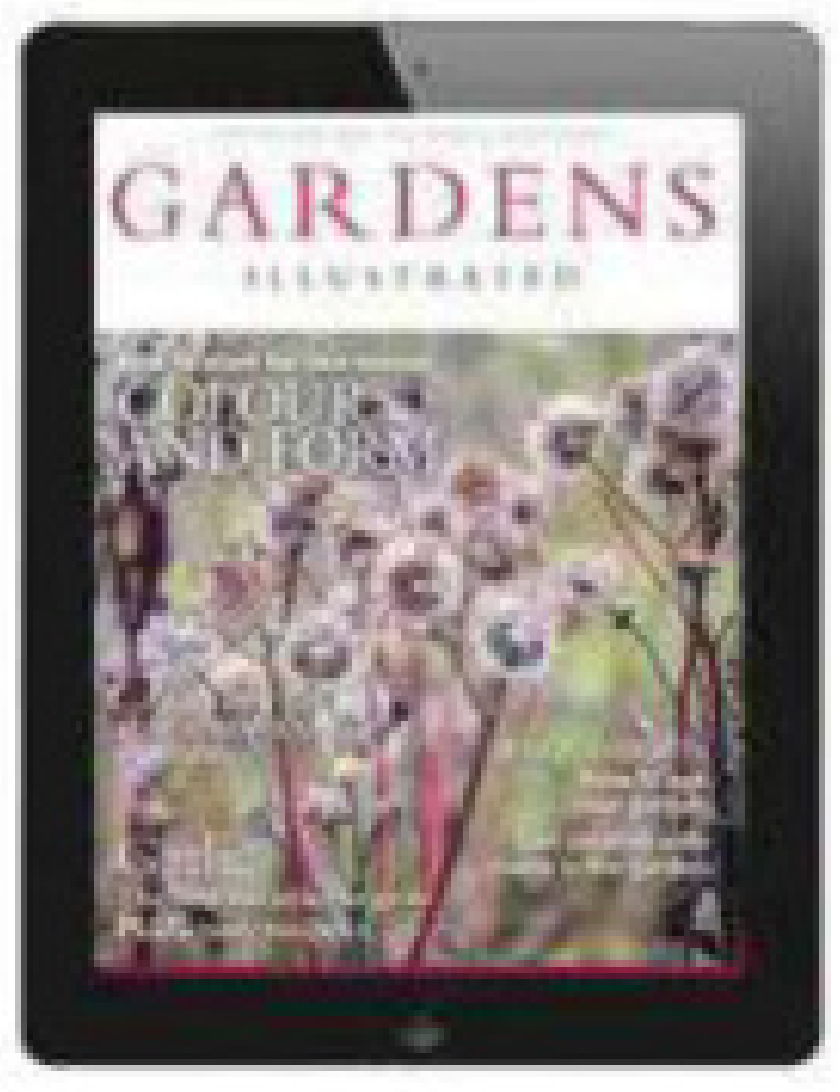
editor's letter

Many of the world's most beautiful gardens have evolved over decades, if not centuries. Brick pathways worn by generations of footsteps; stone and metalwork with a unique patina; trees and shrubs with idiosyncratic shapes evolved over many seasons – each adds a further layer of interest to a garden. *Wabi-sabi*, the ancient Japanese philosophy that celebrates the beauty found in imperfection, is becoming ever more popular in the West and there's no doubt that – even on an unconscious level – the integrity of well-worn, natural materials bring character to your garden. But how can you give a garden a feeling of age when it's relatively recently constructed? Designer Kristy Ramage offers her insights on page 56. Planting trees and shrubs is a great way to ensure interest throughout the seasons and we asked Matthew Biggs to visit specialist grower Bulk Nursery in the Netherlands to find out its owners' recommendations for autumn colour (page 78). November is a good time to plant garlic and on page 72 gardener-cook Jojo Tulloh recommends her favourite cultivars and offers some deliciously garlicky recipes. In our Design Ideas series on page 90, James Alexander-Sinclair looks at clever uses for steel in the garden, and in particular Corten, a group of steel alloys that develop a stable, rust-like appearance, which works well in many different styles of garden. The rich colours of autumn leaves, dried seedheads and skeleton forms are found throughout the issue and serve as another reminder of the astonishing beauty to be found in decay. I hope you enjoy the issue.

Juliet



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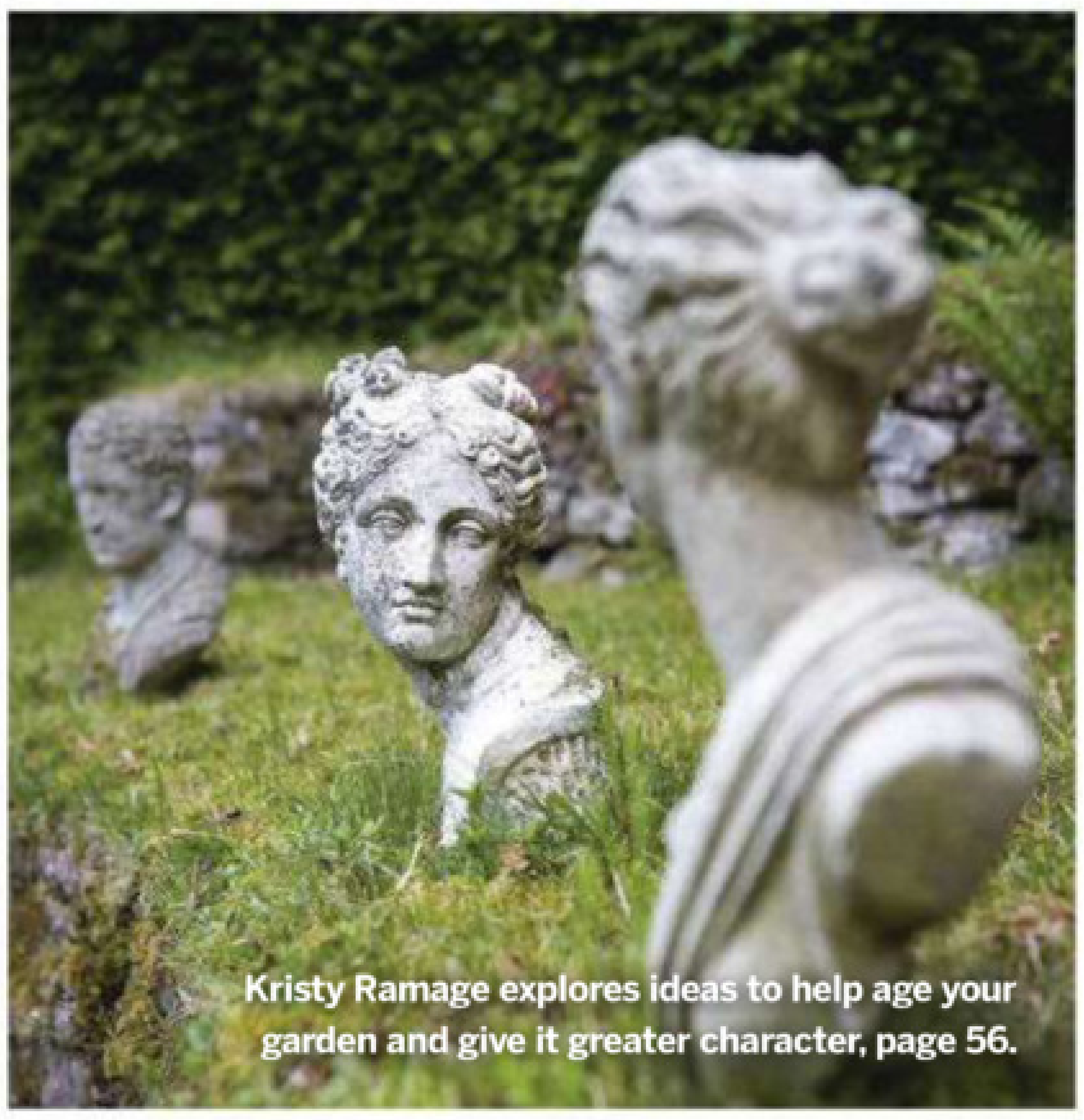
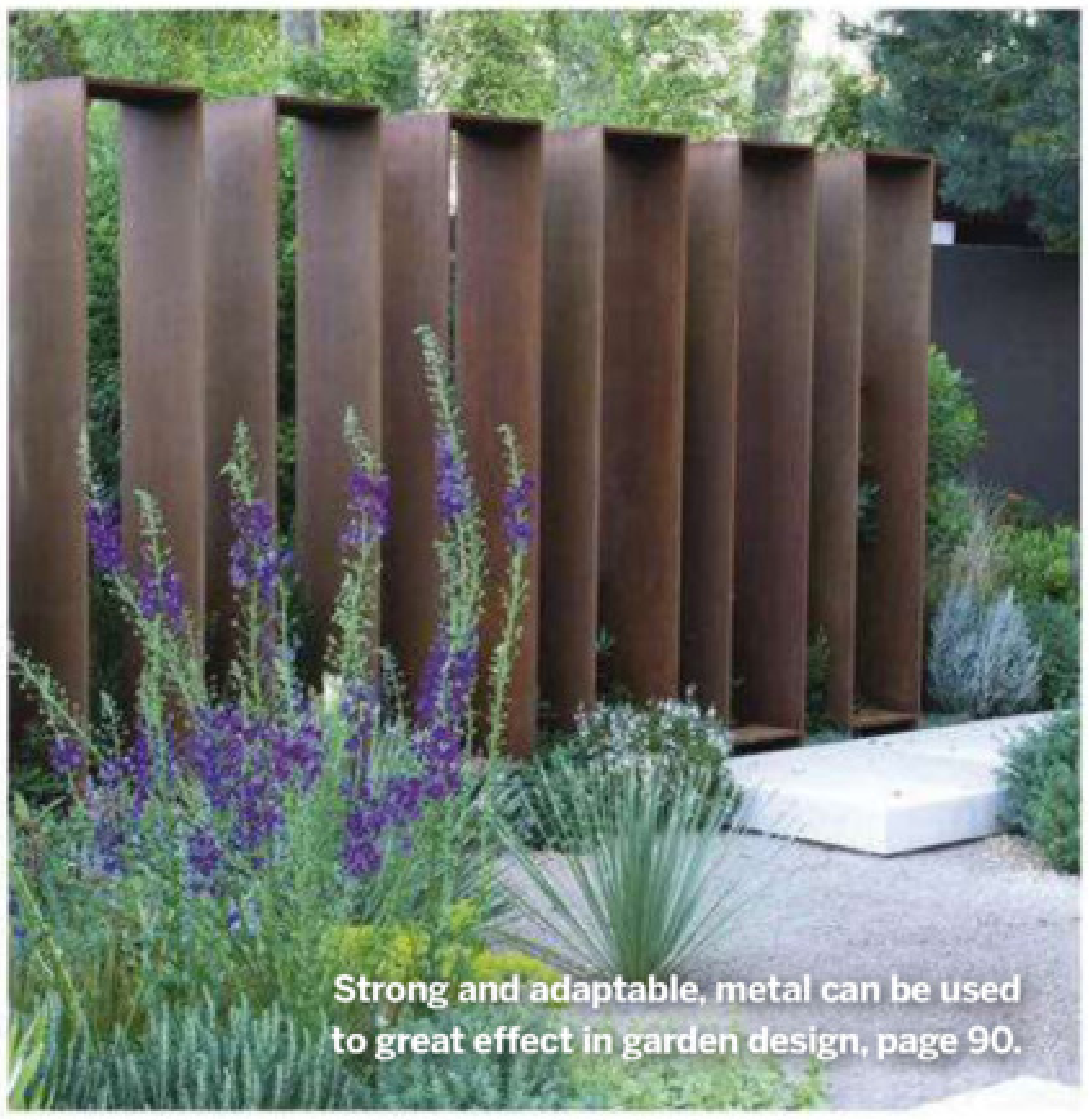


Kristy Ramage explores ideas to help age your garden and give it greater character, page 56.



Strong and adaptable, metal can be used to great effect in garden design, page 90.

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BRITT WILLOUGHBY DYER, GAP PHOTOS//HEATHER EDWARDS DESIGN: ANDY STURGEON

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SIBYLLE PIETREK, ANDREW MONTGOMERY

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At the **London College of Garden Design** our aim is to provide **world-class, inspirational garden designing training.** Our new **Planting Design Diploma**, launched in 2015, was created to enable professionals to develop their passion for plants by working with some of the very best designers and plants people.

Through practical workshops, inspirational lectures and visits the **Planting Design Diploma** explores contemporary and traditional techniques to support and develop your planting design skills. This is a unique course not found anywhere else in Europe, delivered over 30 days from January to June from our home in the **Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew.**

The course is led by **Andrew Fisher Tomlin, designer and Chartered Horticulturist**, and we are fortunate to have **some incredible specialist lecturers** including Rosy Hardy, Neil Lucas of Knoll Gardens, Tony Kirkham from the **Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew** and Nigel Dunnett from the **University of Sheffield**. Designer tutors include James Basson, Jo Thompson, Paul Hervey-Brookes, Anne-Marie Powell, Carolyn Willets and Amanda Patton.

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ROMKE VAN DE KAA

Romke started his horticultural career at RHS Wisley and went on to work as head gardener for Christopher Lloyd at Great Dixter. Now a garden writer and broadcaster back home in the Netherlands, on page 48 he visited the garden of Albert Tielens for us.

"Unfashionable gardens might not always be your favourites, but they certainly are the most interesting."

MAAYKE DE RIDDER

The two favourite garden seasons of photographer Maayke are spring and autumn. On some shoots, such as for Bulk Nursery (see page 78), she can't stop taking pictures and wants to do them over and over again to capture the atmosphere as the leaves turn in colour.

"It was great to be in a nursery run by the same family, with so much devotion, since the 1950s. Even the leaves breathe passion."

MATTHEW BIGGS

Matthew is a gardener, writer and broadcaster and panellist for BBC Radio 4's *Gardeners' Question Time* and a member of the RHS's Woody Plant Committee. His visit to woody plant specialists Bulk Nursery put temptation his way. Read his feature on page 78.

"The Bulk Nursery is packed full of rare and unusual plants and to visit was a privilege and inspiration."

JOE WOODHOUSE

JOJO TULLOH

Jojo is the award-winning author of *The Modern Peasant: Adventures in City Food*. As well as her monthly Gardener Cook column for *Gardens Illustrated*, this month she has also written a feature describing the pleasures of growing and cooking your own garlic. Turn to page 72.

"The sweet, subtle flavours of a home-grown bulb will put you off acrid, long-stored shop garlic for ever."

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FORTY SHADES OF GREEN:
THE GARDENS OF IRELAND
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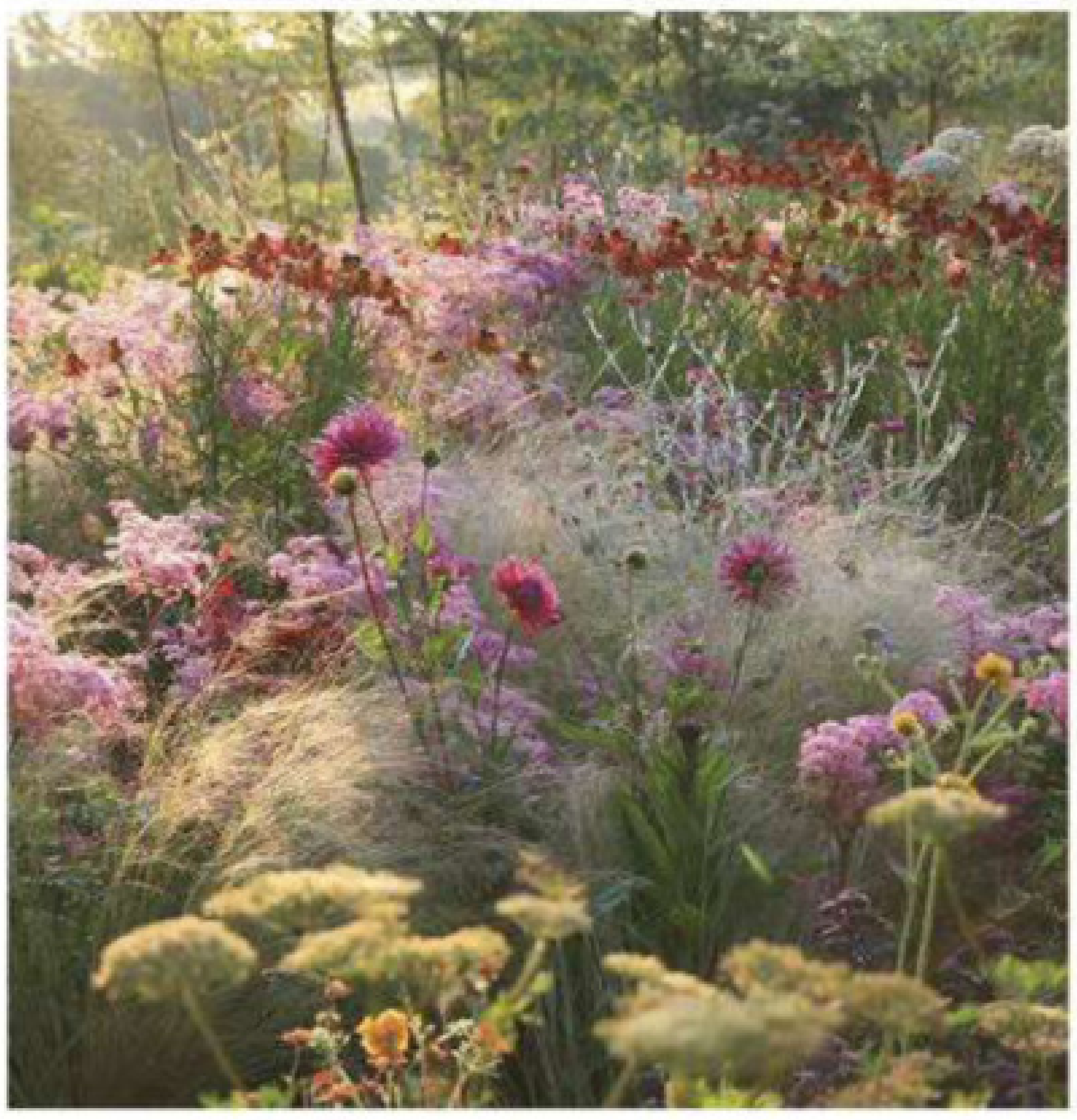

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We are delighted to announce the date of the second *Gardens Illustrated* Festival, on 25-26 March 2017 at the magnificent buildings and gardens of Westonbirt School in the Cotswolds.

Drawing together an exciting programme of speakers, the two days will be packed with discussions and discoveries, plus tours of the school's own gardens and others in the area.

Stepping out of the school buildings, on to the terraced lawns, you'll find our shopping marquee selling a carefully chosen selection of plants from specialist nurseries, and gardening goods from some of our favourite companies and artisan makers. You will also have the opportunity to chat to expert horticulturists and designers about your own garden queries at our plant and design clinics.

Join us and get your gardening season off to a great start.

Speakers for 2017 include: James Alexander-Sinclair, Jinny Blom, Val Bourne, Helen Dillon, Nigel Dunnett, Marina Christopher, Annie Guilfoyle, Andy Hamilton, Mary Keen, Noël Kingsbury, Roy Lancaster, Arne Maynard, Jekka McVicar, Ann-Marie Powell, Sarah Raven, Charlie Ryrie, Troy Scott Smith, Cleve West

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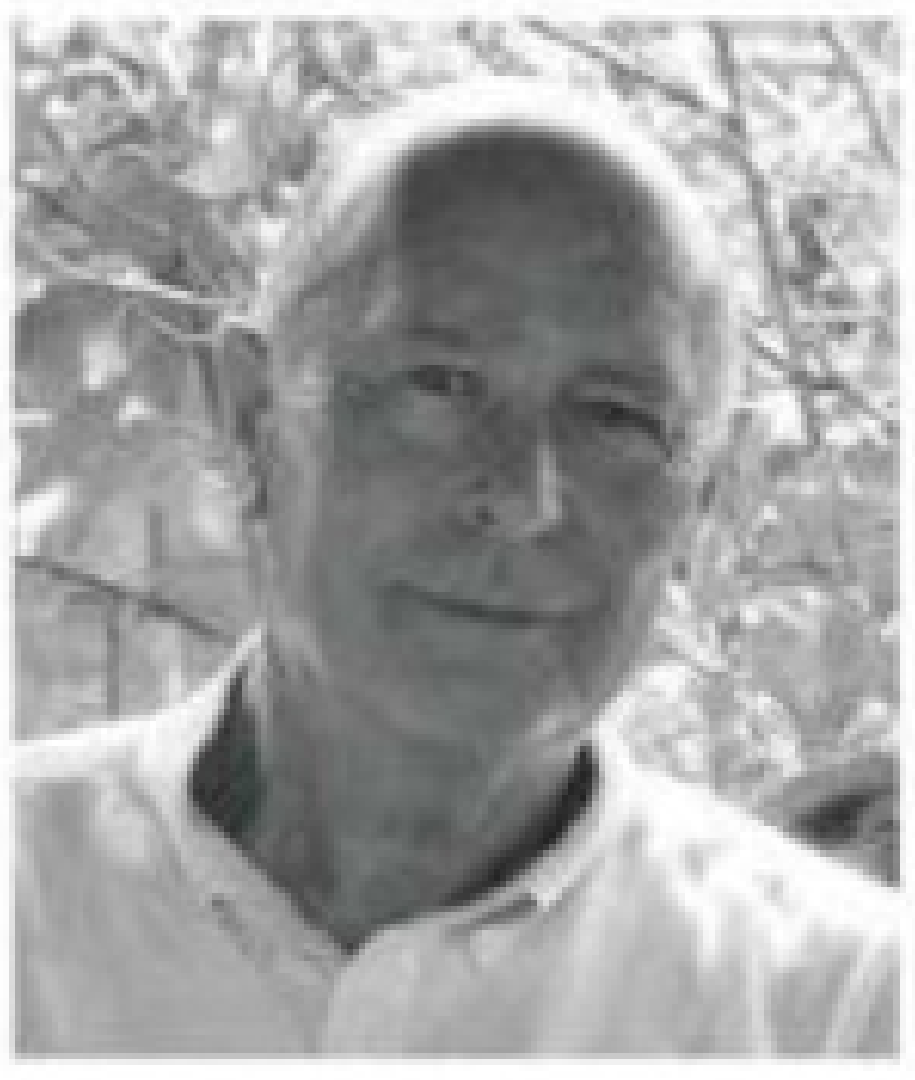

TOUR LEADER
David Wheeler is editor of the gardening journal *Hortus*, which he produces from his home and garden in Herefordshire. In 2009 he was awarded the Veitch Memorial Medal from the RHS.

Denmark is topographically flat (max altitude 172m) but its numerous private and public gardens ride sky-high in any European or Scandinavian league of excellence. While a climate similar to Britain's implies the use of familiar plants, it's the manner in which these ornamentals are put together that distinguishes the country's little-known places of horticultural paradise.

For our specially arranged tour, we immediately dive into this diverse world by heading to the King's Gardens, a blissful oasis in Copenhagen. Adjacent lies the plant-rich, undulating landscape and curvaceous glasshouses of the Botanic Garden.

We stroll through the extensive baroque park at the royal palace, in contrast to its productive Prince Consort's kitchen garden and the Queen of Denmark's orangery. And there could be no better introduction to Denmark's individualism than Exillion, Peter Wibroe's Copenhagen house, remarkably remodelled to resemble a small French château, surrounded by an immaculately kept formal garden, spiced up with Peter's open-fronted Moorish hideaways, half hidden by lush vegetation.

Urban gardening reaches record heights at ØsterGro's city-centre, organic, roof-top, community garden, a calming refuge after an early bird visit to Tivoli, where head gardener Tom Knudsen has created a series of unlikely gardens of great beauty among the white-knuckle rides and lavish sideshows of the world's oldest amusement park.

The romantic landscape of Petersgaard Manor reflects the surrounding countryside, enlivened by grapevine walk, rose borders and magnificent trees. We include a candle-lit dinner set amid the sub-tropical plants of the 1870s 'English' conservatory, hosted by designers Greg Kobbet and Stig Lauritsen. We cross the waters of the Wolf Strait to reach the artist-island of Møn, where plantsmen Hans Sattrup and Keld Nielsen share their highly esteemed farmland garden. There's also Marianne Follings' intriguingly complex perennial garden, the distinguished medicinal garden by 20th-century Danish designer Gudmund Brandt and a unique tomato, chilli and herb nursery where a delicious, freshly harvested, farewell lunch awaits.

Booking details

Price per person, based on two people sharing is £2,998 (single supplement of £300 will be levied by the hotels). The price includes: two nights' bed and breakfast at the 4-star **Copenhagen Admiral Hotel** where all rooms will have a harbour view in this stylish waterfront hotel and two nights' bed and breakfast at the 4-star **Hotel Frederiksminde**, a luxury hotel in a stately 1890 manor house just a step from the beach; 4 evening meals with wine; 3 lunches as well as return flights from London Heathrow.

For more information or to book please contact:
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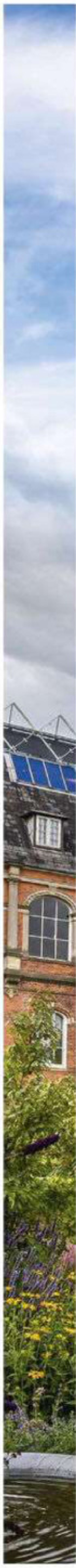
This tour has been arranged exclusively for readers of *Gardens Illustrated* by Boxwood Tours, Quality Garden Holidays, a specialist garden tour company set up in 1990 by Sue and Brian Macdonald, Kew-trained, professional gardeners.

Formal gardens at Exillion.

Rooftop gardening at ØsterGro.

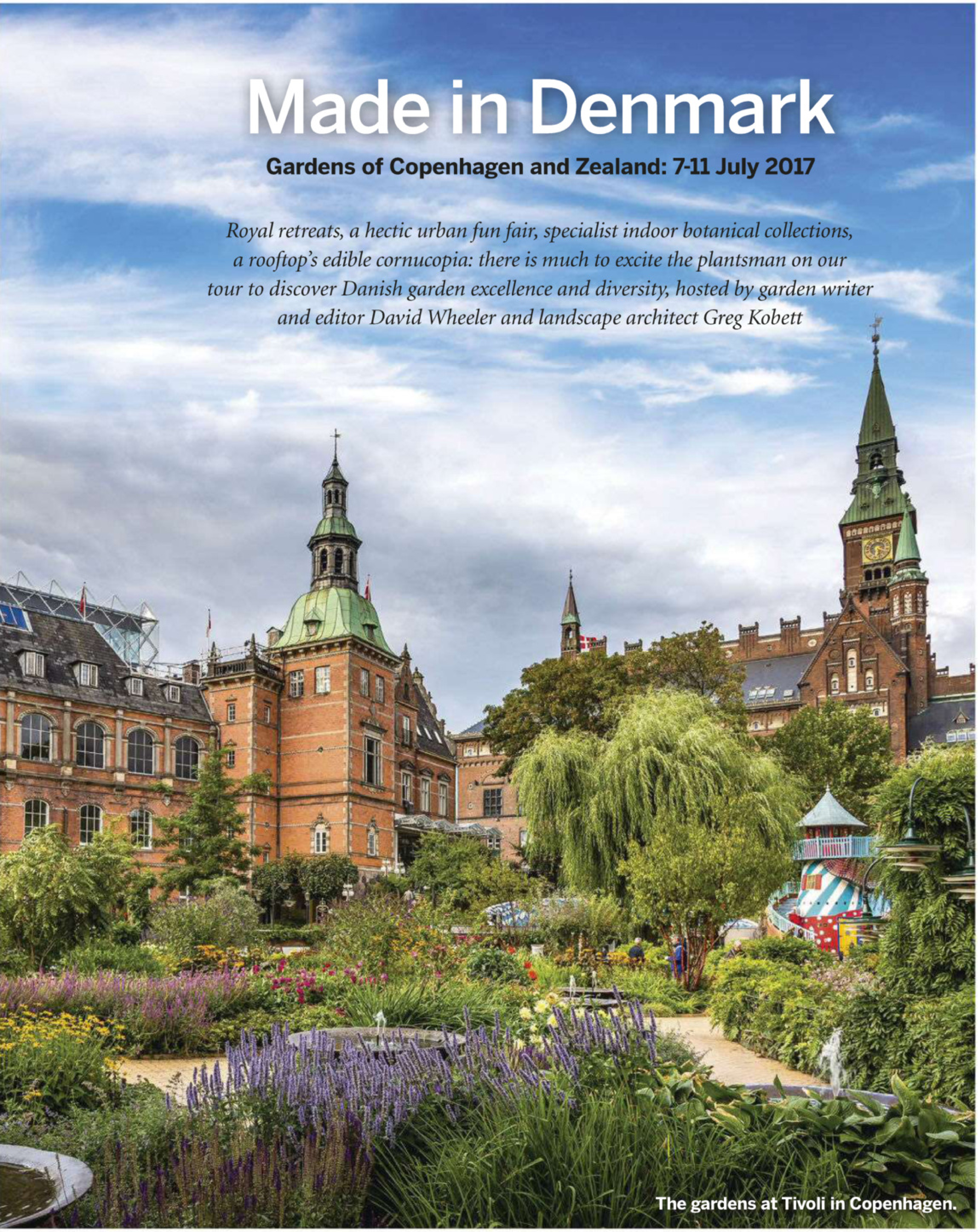
HENNING THOMSEN, TIVOLI. IMAGE: JONATHAN BARSOOK



Made in Denmark

Gardens of Copenhagen and Zealand: 7-11 July 2017

Royal retreats, a hectic urban fun fair, specialist indoor botanical collections, a rooftop's edible cornucopia: there is much to excite the plantsman on our tour to discover Danish garden excellence and diversity, hosted by garden writer and editor David Wheeler and landscape architect Greg Kobett



The gardens at Tivoli in Copenhagen.

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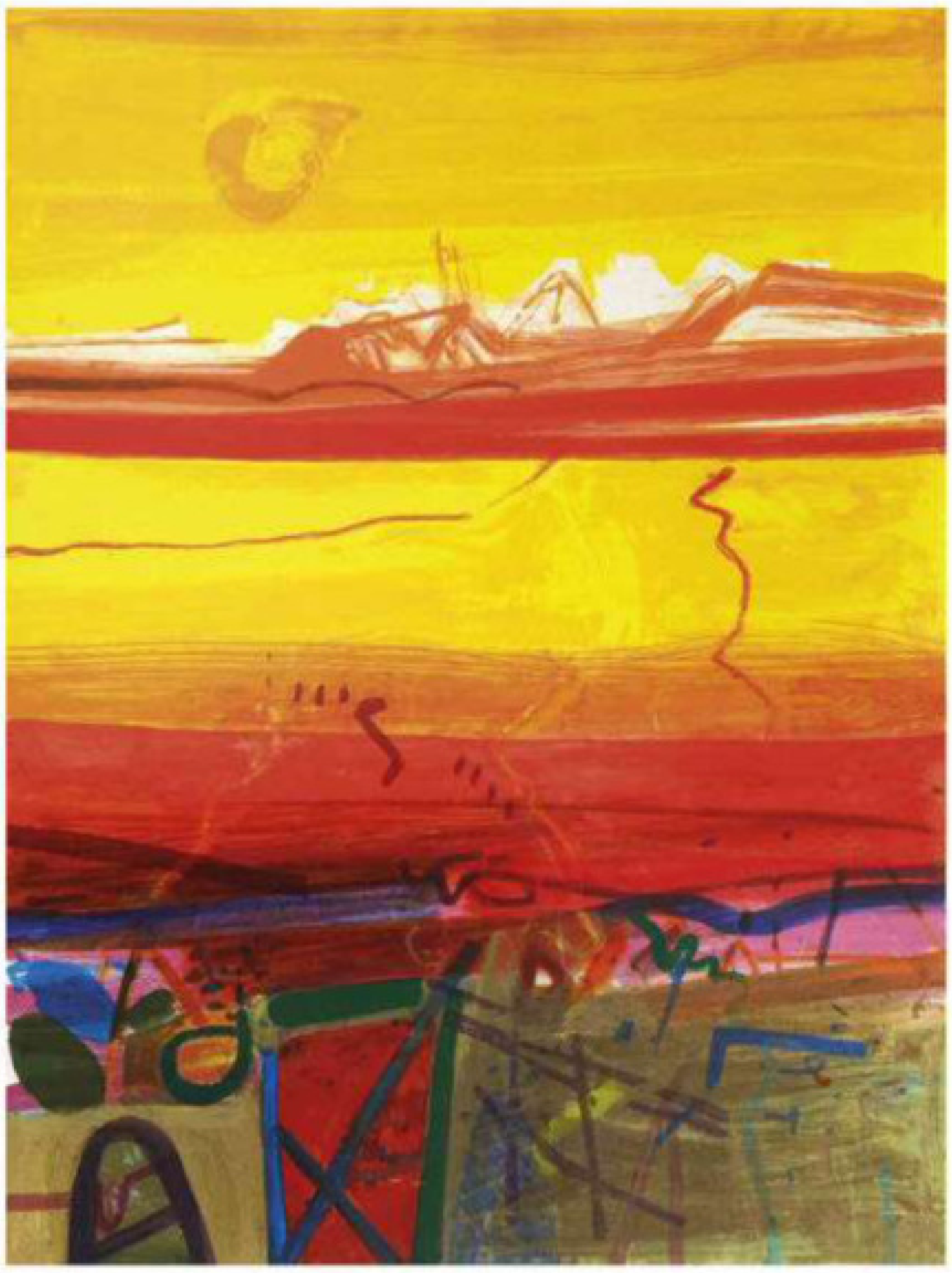

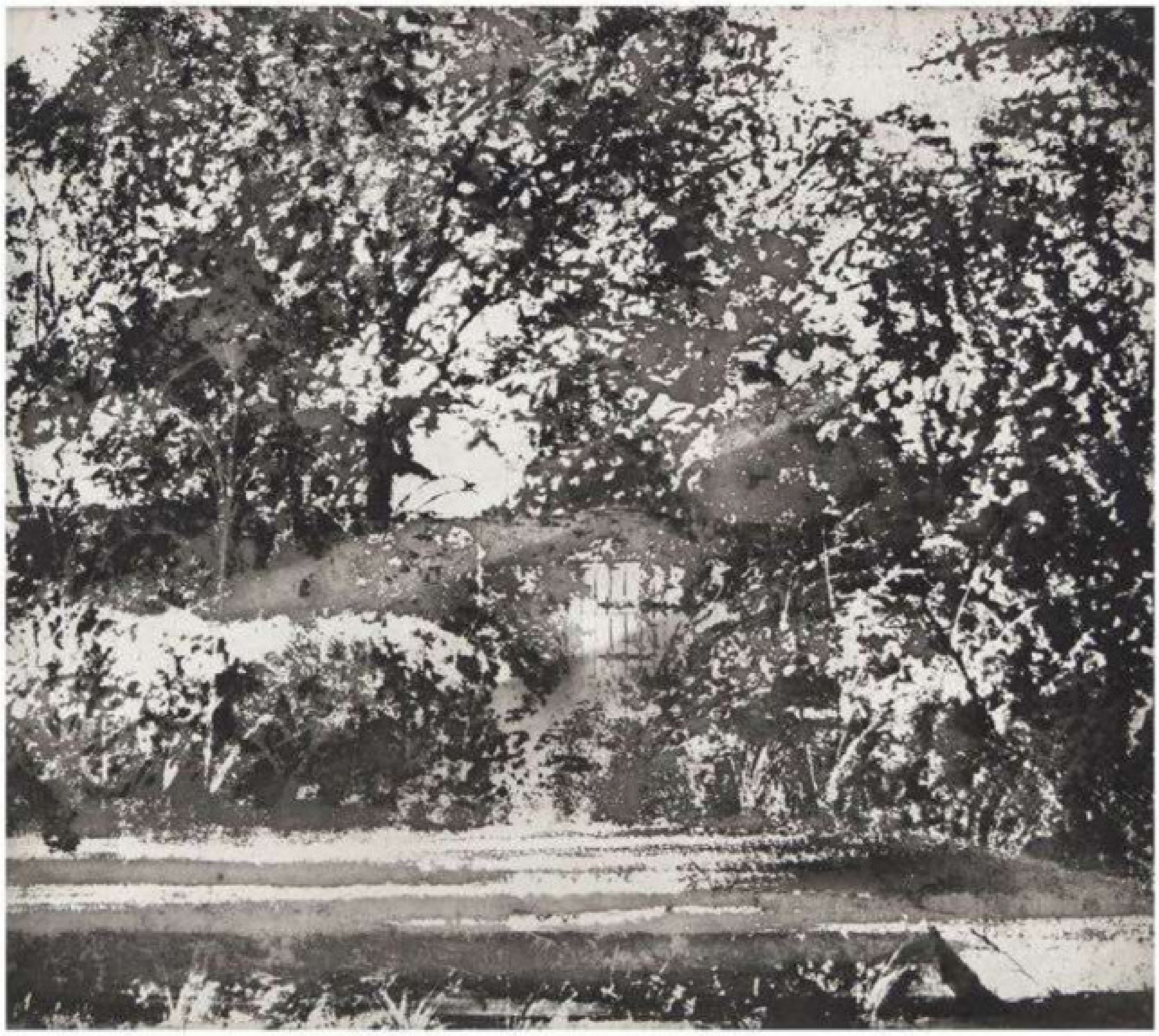

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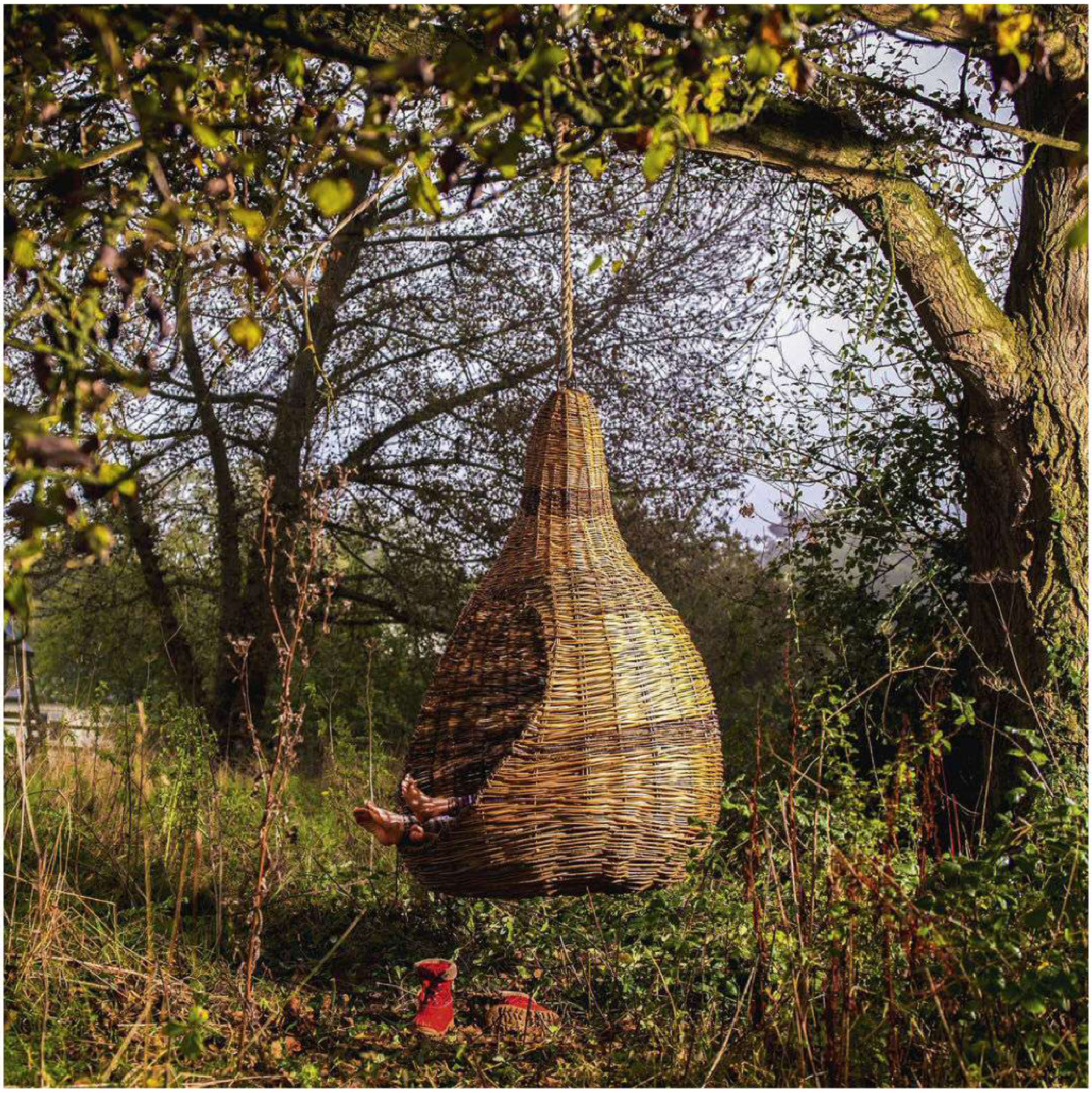
Barbara Rae RA, *Lacken Cross,* 2011. Screenprint. Image size: 80 x 60 cm. Paper size: 102 x 77 cm. Edition of 125. £1,250. © Andy Phillipson/ livewireimage.com; **Stephen Farthing RA,** *Trees # 3,* 2000. Etching. 110 x 76 cm. Unique proof. £8,500 (unframed). © Courtesy of the artist

Dig in

What's happening, where to go, what's in flower and what to buy this month

NEWS COMPILED BY **ALYS HURN**



JOHN RAINE PHOTOGRAPHY

ONLINE SHOPPING

Rich pickings

If you love ethical, hand-made pieces, visit online marketplace Blue Patch. From blacksmiths in Oxfordshire to weavers in the West Country, the site connects shoppers to small, independent businesses across the UK, selling sustainable design, green gifts and eco-furniture, such as the charming willow Pear Pod (above), made to order by artist Ellen Mulcrone. The site was launched in 2014 by environmentalist and painter Jane Langley and all the profits go to help local communities or fund environmental projects. **bluepatch.org**

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EAT NATURAL
fruit & nut bars
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with peanuts and almonds
Pollenation
almond & apricot
with a yoghurt coating
Pollenation

Become a beekeeper

Honeybees are vital for the healthy functioning of our gardens, fields and meadows – and with Eat Natural's Pollenation initiative, you can help ensure their future

Without honeybees, we'd live in a very different world. As well as producing vast amounts of delicious honey, the insects perform essential work in pollinating all sorts of plants. It's a subject that's close to the heart of those at Eat Natural: many of the ingredients found in their bars, from coconuts to cranberries, apricots to almonds, are reliant on pollinators such as honeybees.

That's why Eat Natural has launched Pollenation: a campaign designed to support the humble honeybee and promote the brilliant work they do. To start, they're searching for passionate, dedicated people to join a small army of beekeepers. The positions are open to anyone, whatever their background and experience, and those chosen will get all the help, support and equipment they'll need to get started – from protective clothing and tools to a state-of-the-art Eat Natural beehive, kitted out with hive-monitoring technology. Eat Natural will even give you your bees!

At the heart of the initiative is the Eat Natural beehive, a groundbreaking piece of kit designed to create a buzz among a new wave of beekeepers. The hives are made from disused pallets from the Eat Natural Makery, and are designed and made in the UK by traditional woodworkers and metalworkers.

Get involved

If you'd like to apply to become a beekeeper, simply head to, **eatnatural.co.uk/pollenation**. You'll be asked to answer three simple questions, and explain why you think bees are so important and what would make you an ideal Eat Natural beekeeper.

Eat Natural is keen to build close relationships with its beekeepers. So, for the lucky few selected, this is much more than a prize. Not only will you have the opportunity to share pictures and stories of your beekeeping experiences, but you'll help provide the key ingredient for a special fund-raising Eat Natural honey bar. And, most importantly, by providing data from your hives, you'll be aiding research into the honeybee and helping to ensure their future.

Join Pollenation at

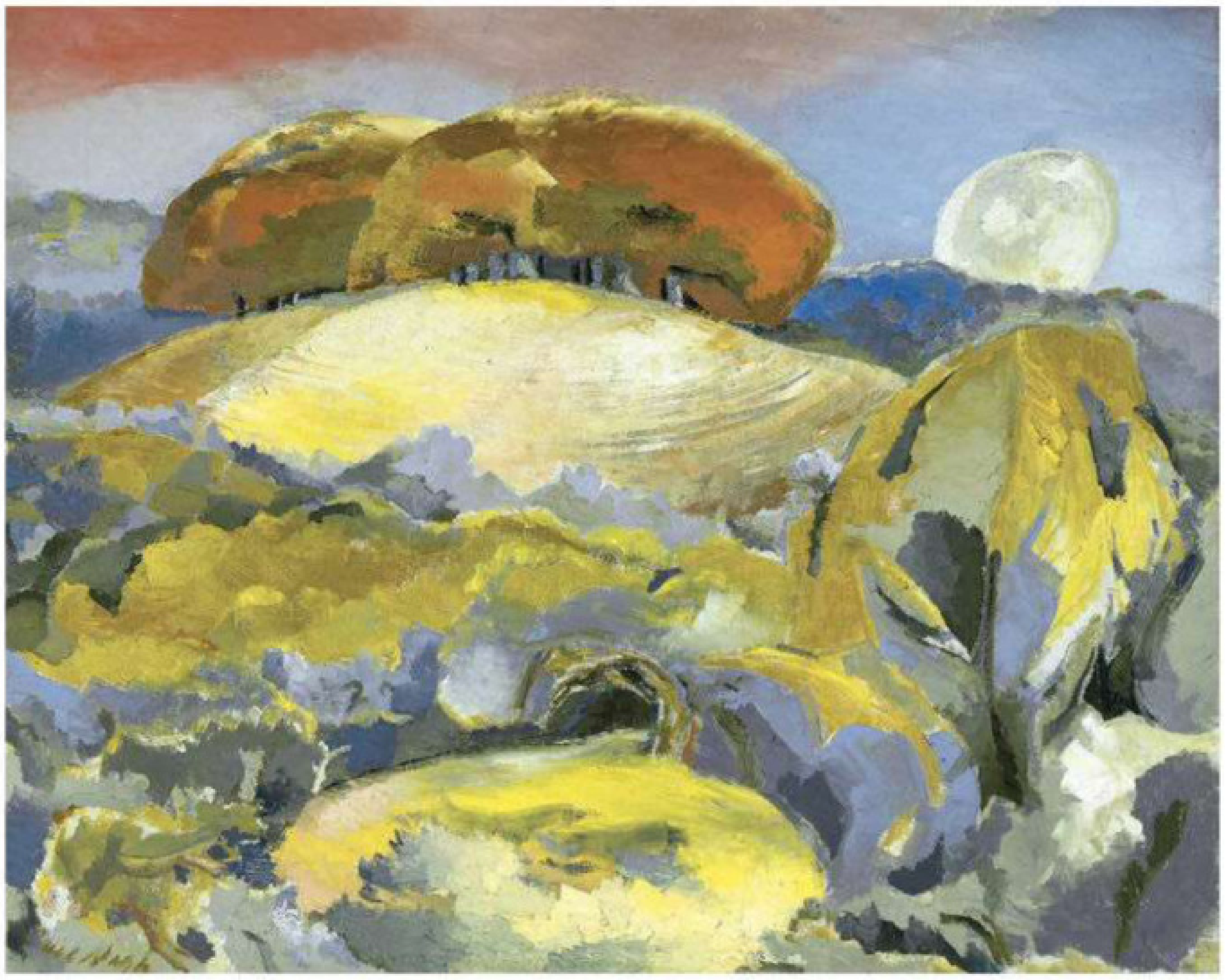
eatnatural.co.uk/pollenation

Competition open to 18 years plus and resident in the UK. Closing date for entries is 22 December 2016. No purchase necessary. 25 prizes available. Must commit for a period of at least 2 years. Upload required. For full details, simply visit www.eatnatural.co.uk/pollenation

Pollenation
let's make honey

AN ARTIST'S EYE

The largest exhibition of artist Paul Nash's work for a generation, comes to Tate Britain this autumn. Paul Nash, *which runs until 5 March 2017, will examine the artist's position at the centre of British modernism with a collection of his paintings and drawings inspired by the ancient landscapes of England. Tickets cost £16.50. tate.org.uk*



Right *Landscape of the Moon's Last Phase*, 1944, one of a series of paintings depicting Wittenham Clumps in Oxfordshire, an area Nash repeatedly visited throughout his life.

TOOLSHED
Colouring Book

TIDYING THE SHED

A fitting tribute

Art teacher and illustrator Lee John Phillips has set himself an extraordinary task: to draw every item in his late grandfather's shed. As well as hand tools, the shed is filled with collections of salvaged and assorted miscellany in keeping with the post-war make-do-and-mend ethic. Lee estimates that there are over 100,000 items, and he is determined to treat each with equal importance, regardless of how small or seemingly insignificant. Two and a half years into The Shed Project, Lee has drawn 5,200 items, about five per cent of the total. Follow the daily progress of this intriguing labour of love on his social media feeds @LEEJOHNPHILLIPS. A colouring book of his drawings is available from Laurence King Publishing, for £9.95. **greenhillstudios.co.uk**

GARDEN WILDLIFE

Seasonal lodgings

Before lighting any bonfires this month, be sure to keep an eye out for hibernating hedgehogs who like to hide in leafy log piles. Provide a safe haven for these spiny mammals whose numbers are in sharp decline with this attractive wicker hedgehog house, £35 from Allomorphic. The house measures 40cm in diameter and is made from natural materials. **allomorphic.co.uk**

NEW FRUIT TREE

Miraclaude of nature

Its flavour is similar to a Reine Claude greengage but, in terms of fruiting, the new plum cultivar 'Miraclaude' has more in common with the prolific mirabelle plum, cropping heavily in mid August with sweet-tasting fruit. Bred in France, 'Miraclaude' is now available from garden fruit specialist Pomona Fruits as 1.2-1.5m trees for £24.95. Requires a 'Victoria' as a pollinator. **pomonafruits.co.uk**

PAUL NASH, *LANDSCAPE OF THE MOON'S LAST PHASE*, 1944, COURTESY OF NATIONAL MUSEUM LIVERPOOL (WALKER ART GALLERY)/ LAURENCEKINGPUBLISHING.COM/POMONAFRUITS.

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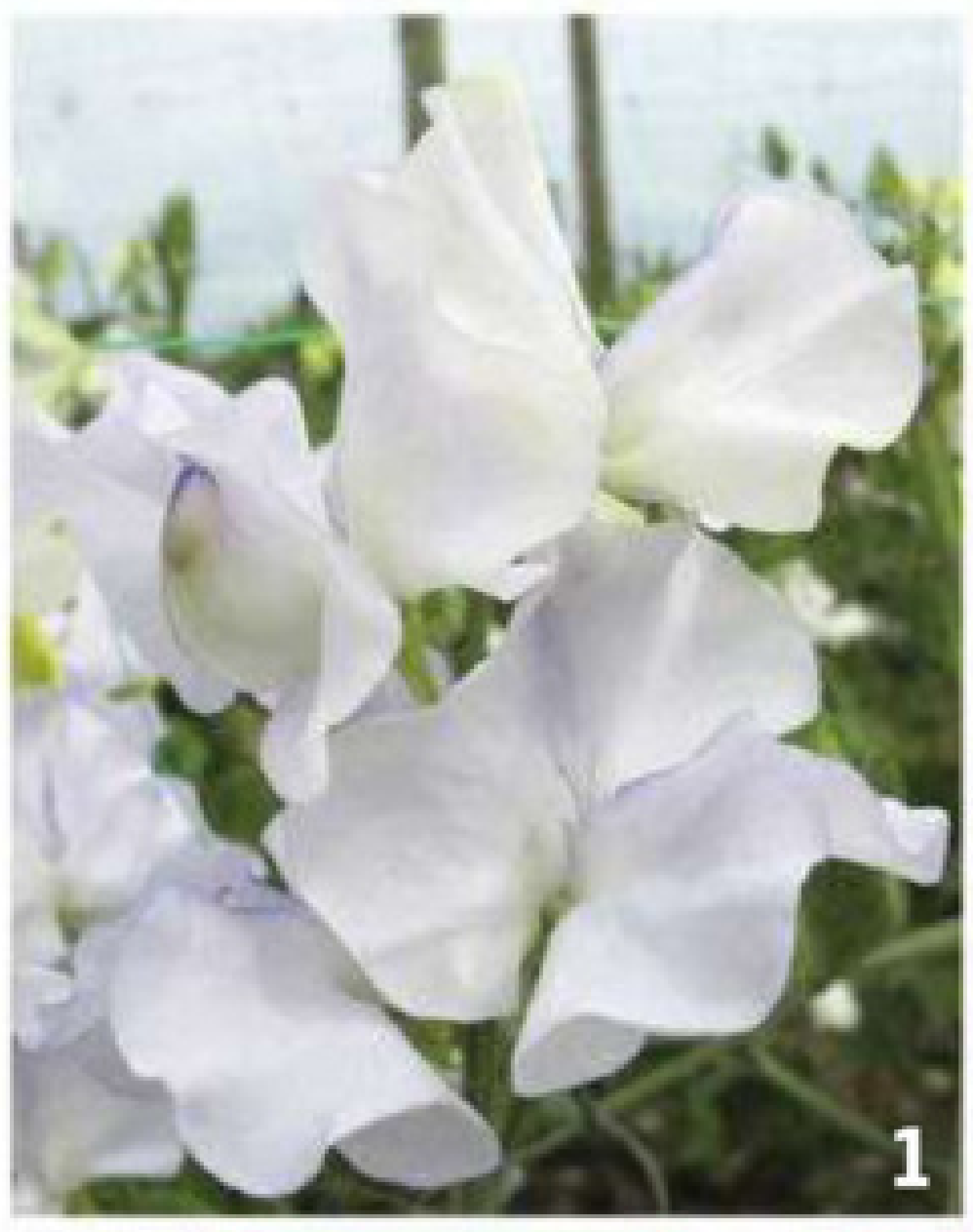
GARDENS ILLUSTRATED FESTIVAL

Looking ahead to spring

Get the 2017 growing season off to a fertile start with a visit to our Festival, providing everything you need from design and planting clinics to gardening goods and talks by your favourite gardeners and designers. See page 8 or go to **gardensfestival.com**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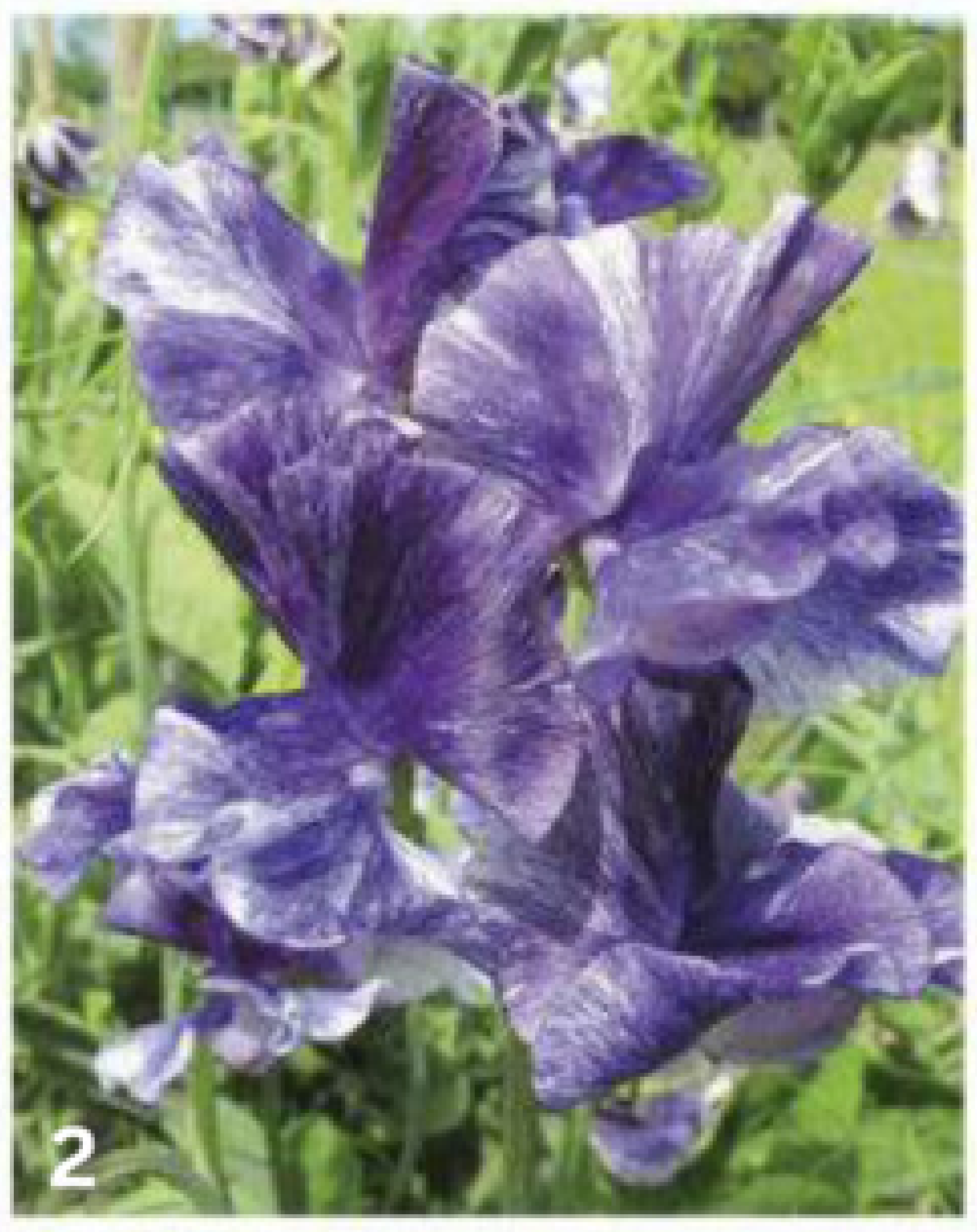
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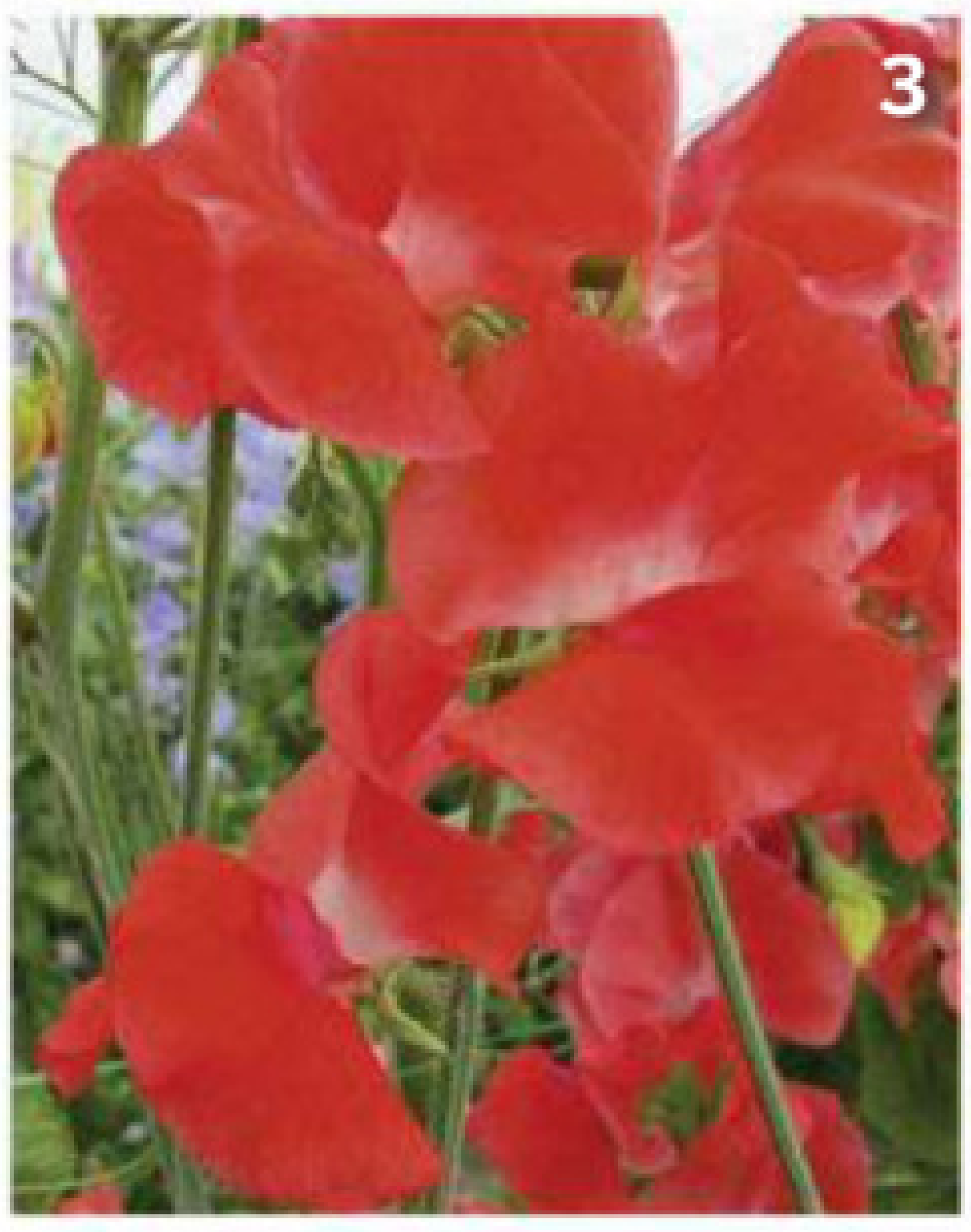
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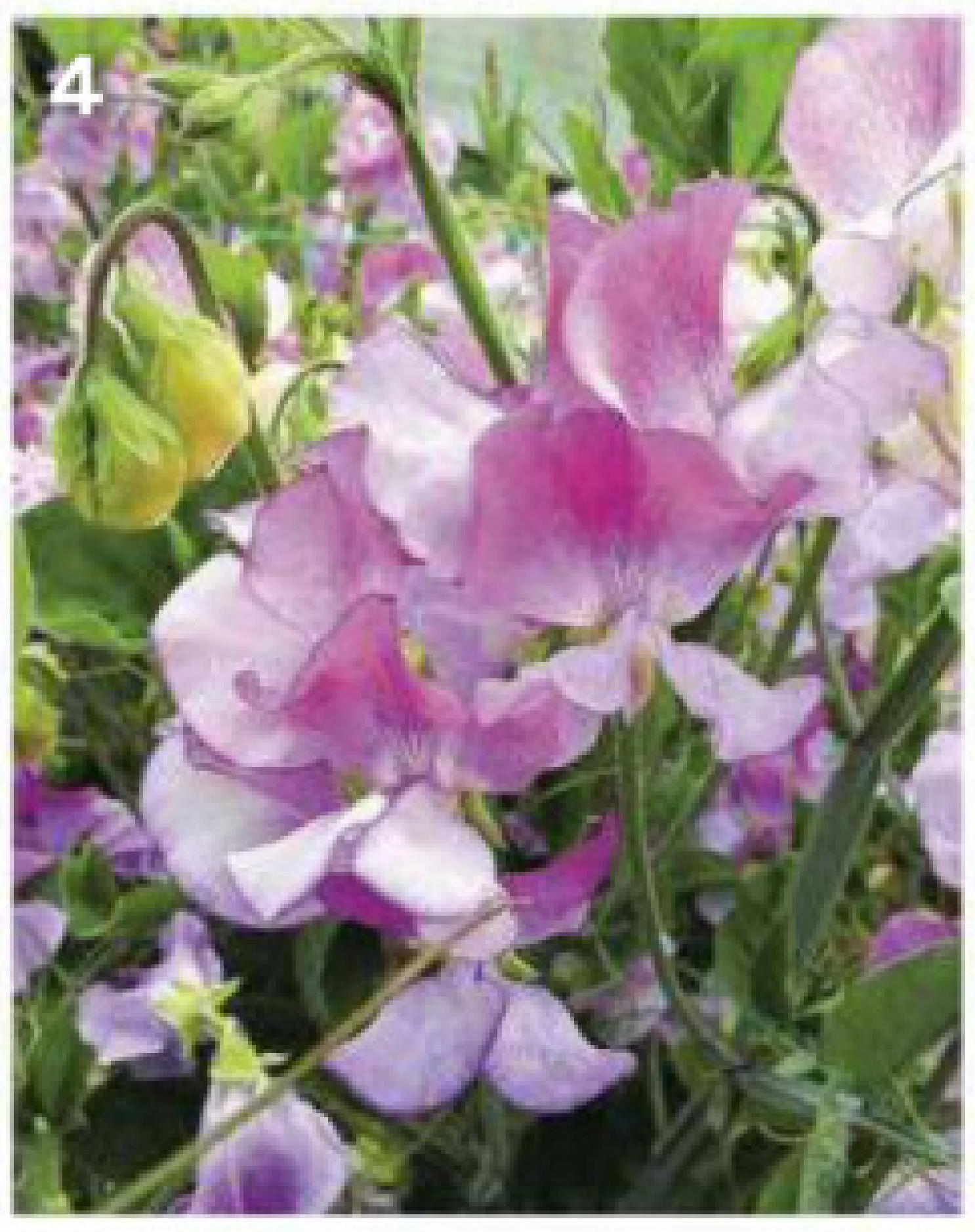
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SWEET PEAS

The sweet smell of success

Now is the ideal time to sow sweet pea seeds (*Lathyrus odoratus*) and there is a clutch of new cultivars out there to try. Horticulturist Roger Parsons has added seven new types to his 2016-17 catalogue including 'Jack Eveleigh' **(1)**, with its pale-blue flush on white flowers; 'Mr P' **(2)**, with flaked dark-blue flowers; and the striking salmon-orange 'Edith Flanaghan' **(3)**. The sugar almond-coloured 'Solway Shimmer' **(4)** is a semi-dwarf type, but no less striking and still guaranteed to produce a heady scent come late spring. **rpsweetpeas.com**

Diary

Christmas at Waddesdon.

- **Orchid Show**
Orchids from around the world will be on display, with helpful advice at hand on how to grow them. Organised by the British Orchid Council. 5-6 November, 10am-4pm. £5. Holiday Inn, Norwich, Norfolk NR6 6JA. british-orchid-council.info

- **Garden Lecture**
Horticulturist and TV presenter Toby Buckland hosts the annual Cambridge University Botanic Garden lecture, this year on attracting wildlife. 7 November, 7.30pm. From £12. University Botanic Garden, 1 Brookside, Cambridge CB2 1JE. Tel 01223 336265, botanic.cam.ac.uk.

- **Christmas at Waddesdon**
Immerse yourself in the *Field of Light*, an installation by British artist Bruce Munro that will illuminate the house from dusk each day. 9 November 2016 – 2 January 2017, 11am-6pm. Waddesdon Manor, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire HP18 0JH. Tel 01296 653226, waddesdon.org.uk

- **The Ideal Home Show**
Inspiration showcase for outdoor and indoor living, home improvements and seasonal food and drink. Manchester Event City, 10-13 November and London Olympia, 23-27 November. From £13. Tel 0844 209 7330, idealhomeshow.co.uk

- **Pruning Masterclass**
A practical, easy-to-follow, beginner's tutorial on how to train and prune a wide range of fruiting trees. 15 November, 10am-12.30pm. £34. Barnsdale Gardens, The Avenue, Exton, Oakham, Rutland LE15 8AH. Tel 01572 813200, barnsdalegardens.co.uk

- **Christmas Floral Workshop**
Florist Jonathan Moseley will share his 20 years of experience to help you create your own special festive display. Christmas buffet lunch included. 19 November, 10.30am-4pm. £135. Woburn Abbey and Gardens, Woburn, Bedfordshire MK17 9WA. Tel 01525 290333, woburnabbey.co.uk

- **Angela Harding Exhibition**
Artist Angela Harding has a new exhibition *Flights of Memory*, featuring a collection of prints and paintings inspired by British wildlife. 19 November 2016 – 26 February 2017. Yorkshire Sculpture Park, West Bretton, Wakefield WF4 4LG. Tel 01924 832631, ysp.co.uk.

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Birdcam, £99.95, 01981 500391, wigglywigglers.co.uk

House Martin Nest, £16.99, 0345 034 7733, shopping.rspb.org.uk

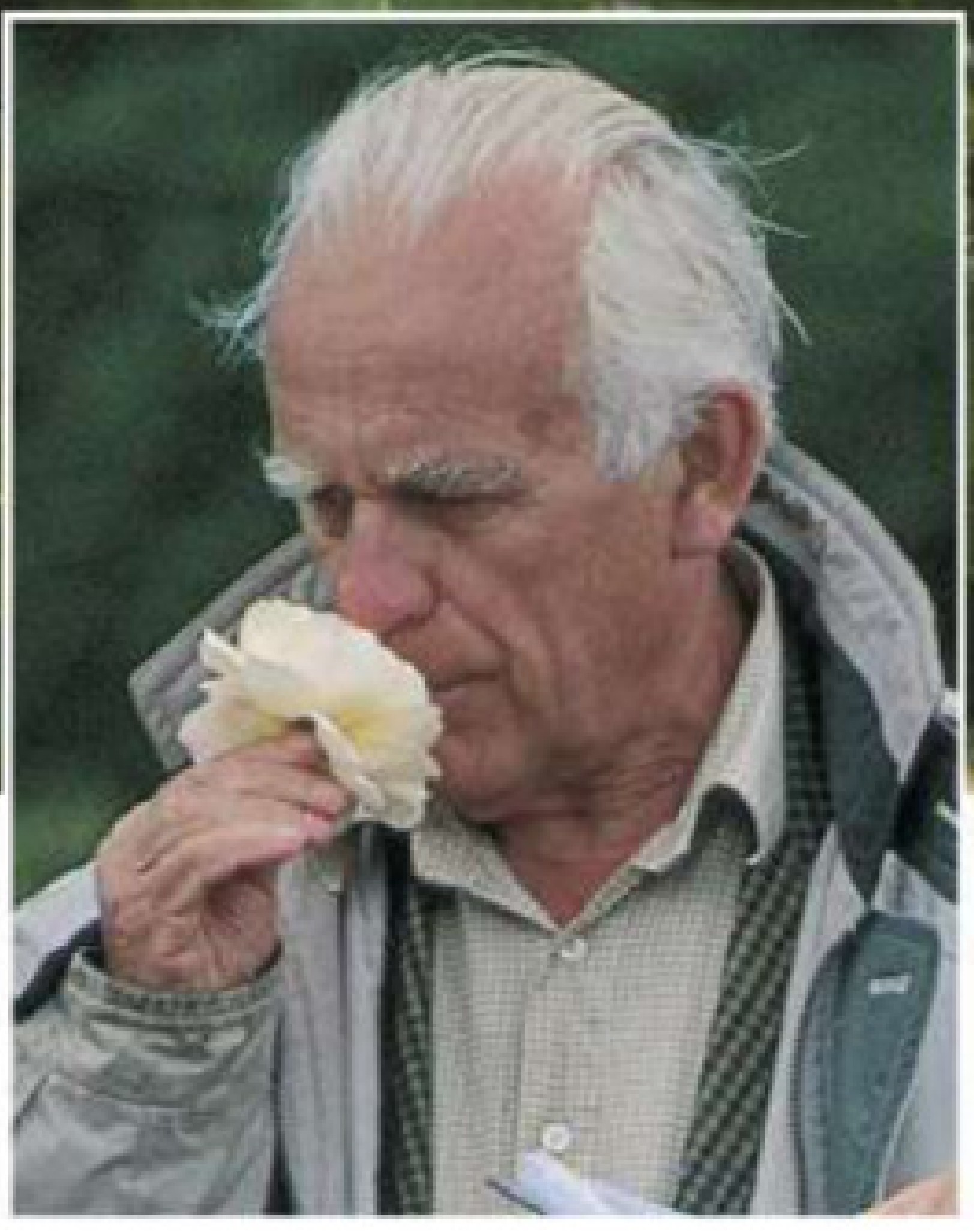
Bee Drinker, £1,950, 01433 631945, hannahbennett.co.uk

Hedgehog Care Home, £47.95, 0800 085 4865, arkwildlife.co.uk

Ark Classic Wild Bird Food, from £2 for 1kg, 0800 085 4865, arkwildlife.co.uk

Galvanised Bird Food Tin, £18.95, 0345 605 2505, worm.co.uk

Roald Dahl *(Ausowlish)*



David C.H. Austin

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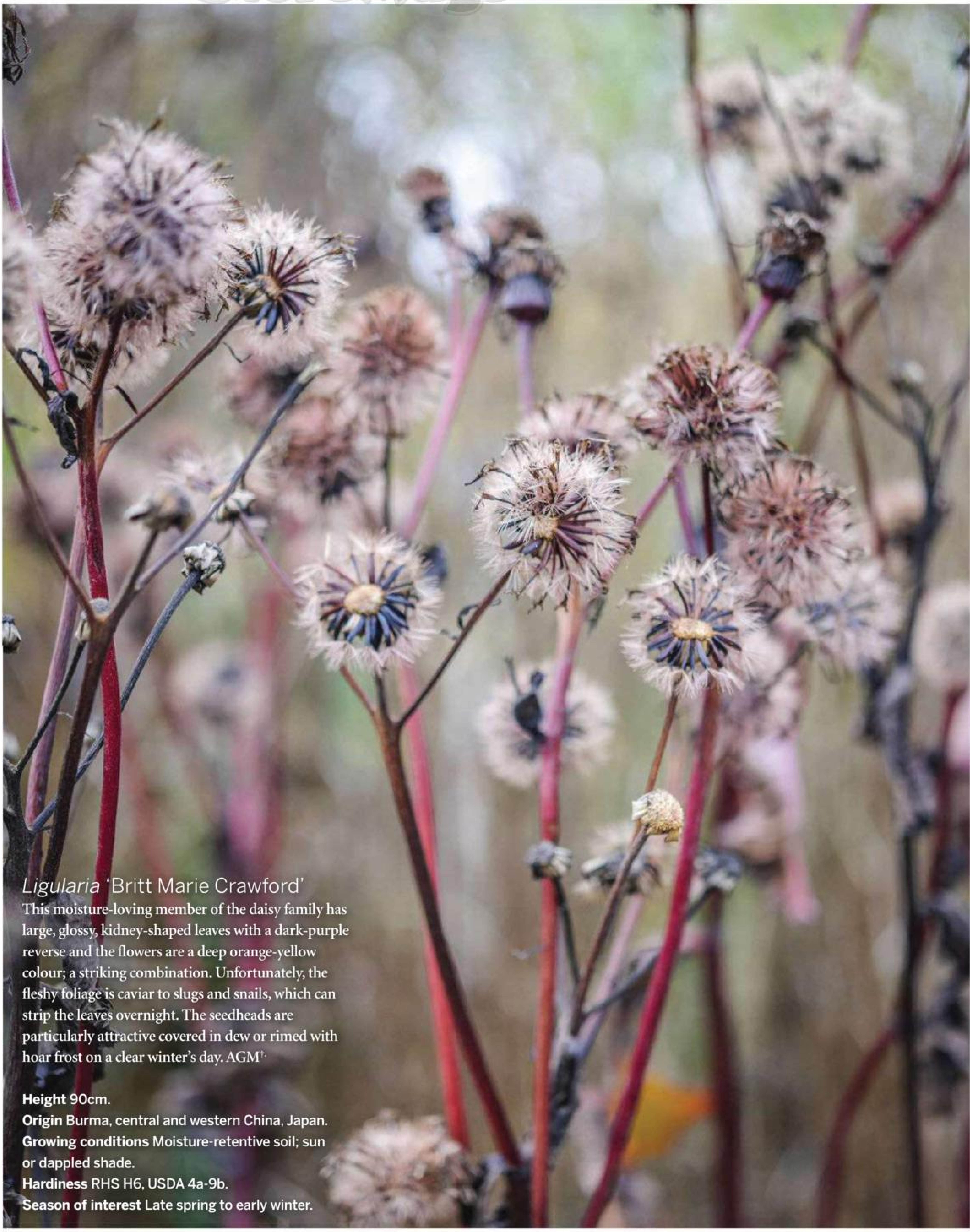


Ligularia 'Britt Marie Crawford'

This moisture-loving member of the daisy family has large, glossy, kidney-shaped leaves with a dark-purple reverse and the flowers are a deep orange-yellow colour; a striking combination. Unfortunately, the fleshy foliage is caviar to slugs and snails, which can strip the leaves overnight. The seedheads are particularly attractive covered in dew or rimed with hoar frost on a clear winter's day. AGM[†]

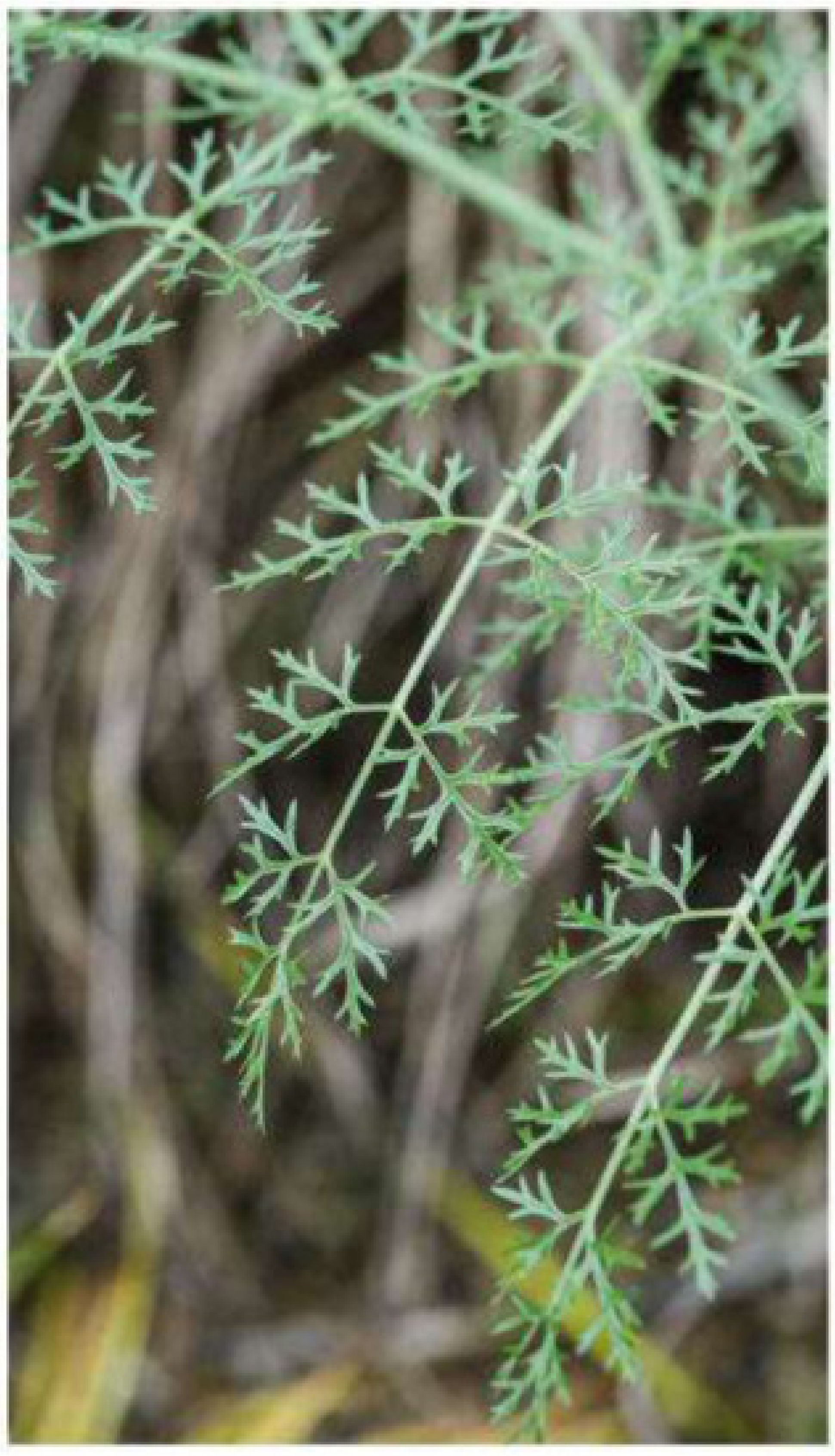
Height 90cm.
Origin Burma, central and western China, Japan.
Growing conditions Moisture-retentive soil; sun or dappled shade.
Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 4a-9b.
Season of interest Late spring to early winter.

November plants

As winter begins to bite, Marina suggests colourful stems and foliage, graceful grasses and delicate flowers to brighten light-starved days

WORDS MARINA CHRISTOPHER PHOTOGRAPHS JASON INGRAM

Marina Christopher is a plantswoman who owns Phoenix Perennial Plants in Hampshire*.



Ferula assa foetida

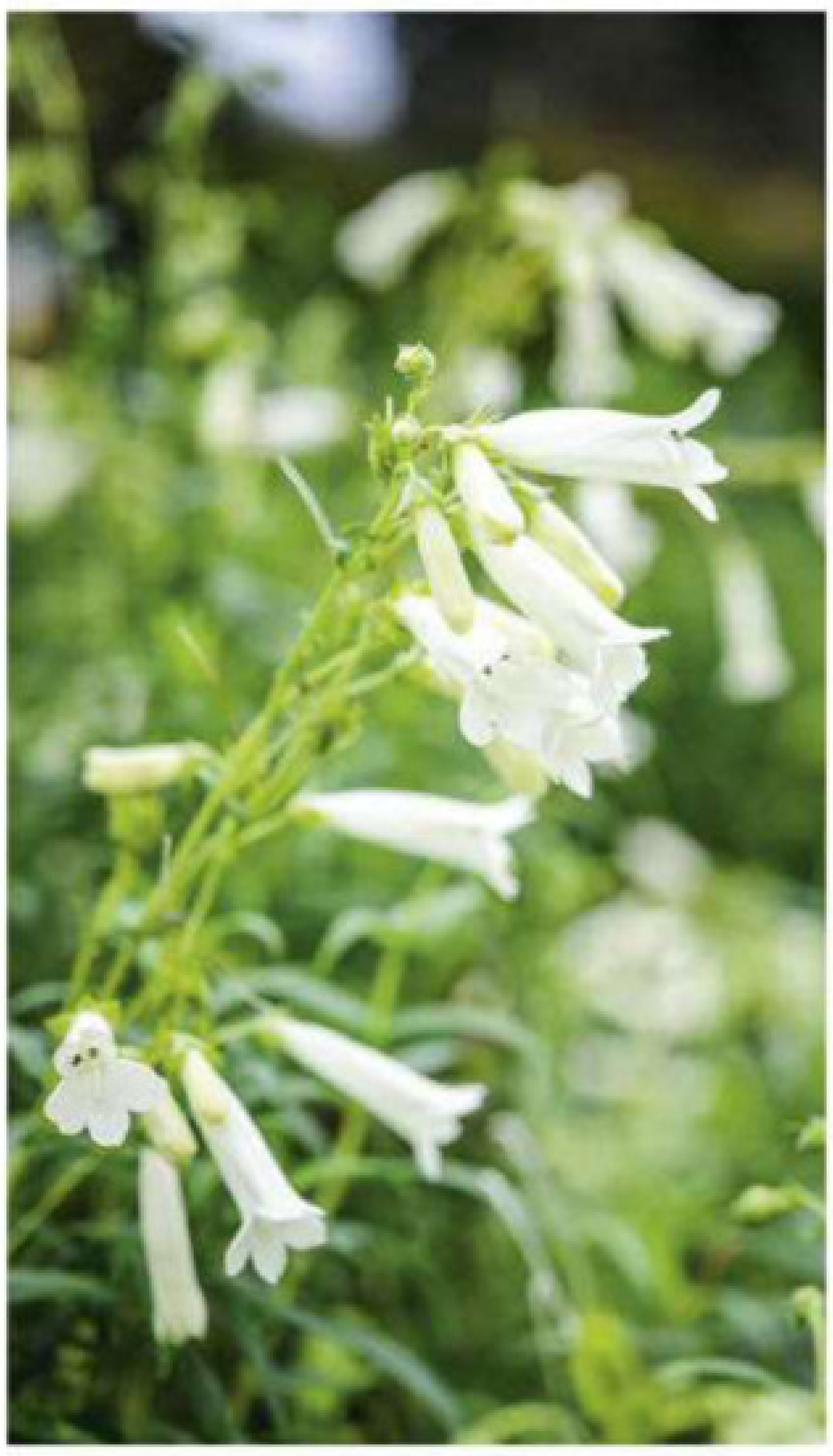
For aficionados of oriental cooking, this is an important ingredient in curries and, apparently, in Worcestershire sauce. A strong-smelling gum is obtained from making incisions in the upper part of the root, which is dried to a waxy, orange-brown resin. So foul-smelling is this resin, it has earned the plant the colloquial name of devil's dung; luckily the odour disappears during cooking. It is perennial with flat umbels of yellow flowers in the summer months but becomes summer dormant if it isn't going to bloom. New, deeply dissected grey-green foliage appears in autumn.

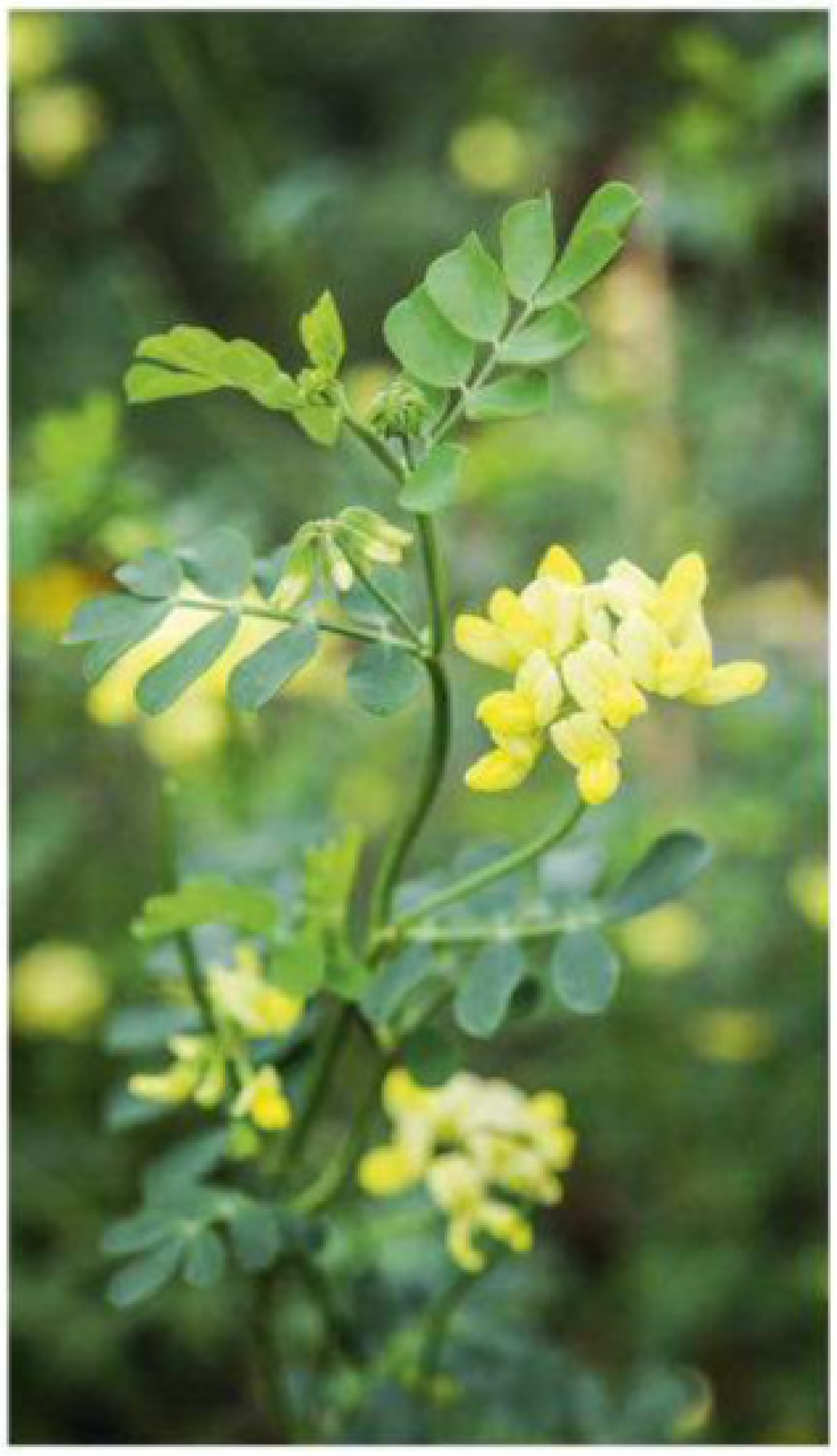
Height 2m.
Origin Iran, Afghanistan.
Growing conditions Well-drained soil; sun.
Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 4a-10b.
Season of interest Summer to early winter.

Penstemon hartwegii 'Albus'

Early in my career I attempted to grow as many wild-collected species of penstemon as I could and succeeded in germinating over 100 different species and subspecies. Unfortunately, the high humidity of the British climate caused many to succumb to fungal diseases over winter whereas in their native habitat the air is dry and cold and fungal infections are rare. This bushy penstemon has narrow, glossy, pale-green leaves with creamy buds opening to slender, tubular, white flowers. It is not prone to powdery mildew and is reliable in most weather conditions.

Height 75-90cm.
Origin Mexico.
Growing conditions Well-drained soil; sun.
Hardiness RHS H4.
Season of interest Summer to late autumn.





Coronilla valentina subsp. *glauca* 'Citrina'

This shrubby member of the pea family has highly scented, pale-lemon flowers and attractive, evergreen, pinnate, blue-green foliage. The fragrance is delightful when wafted on a gentle breeze; taken indoors it becomes a pungent, cloying odour. In mild winters this shrub can flower continuously but will stop when temperatures dip below freezing. Rather ungainly in habit, it benefits from judicious pruning – I've seen excellent examples where it has been topiarised to form a perfect sphere or trained like an espalier against a fence. AGM.

Height 1.5m.
Origin Mediterranean, Aegean.
Growing conditions Well-drained soil; sun.
Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 7b-11.
Season of interest Year round.

*Open by appointment only. Email marina@phoenixperennialplants.co.uk for details. Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.

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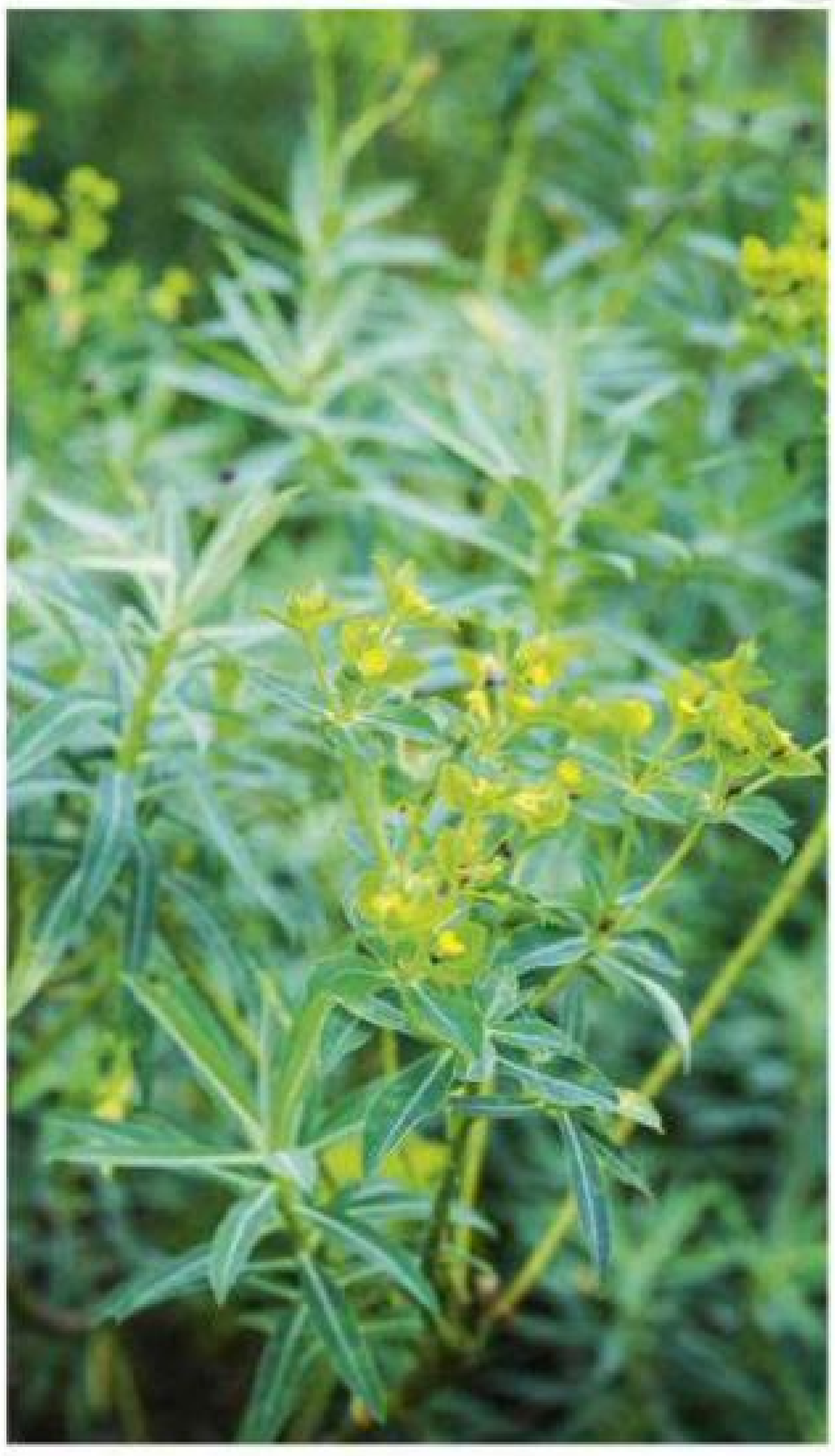


Euphorbia margalidiana

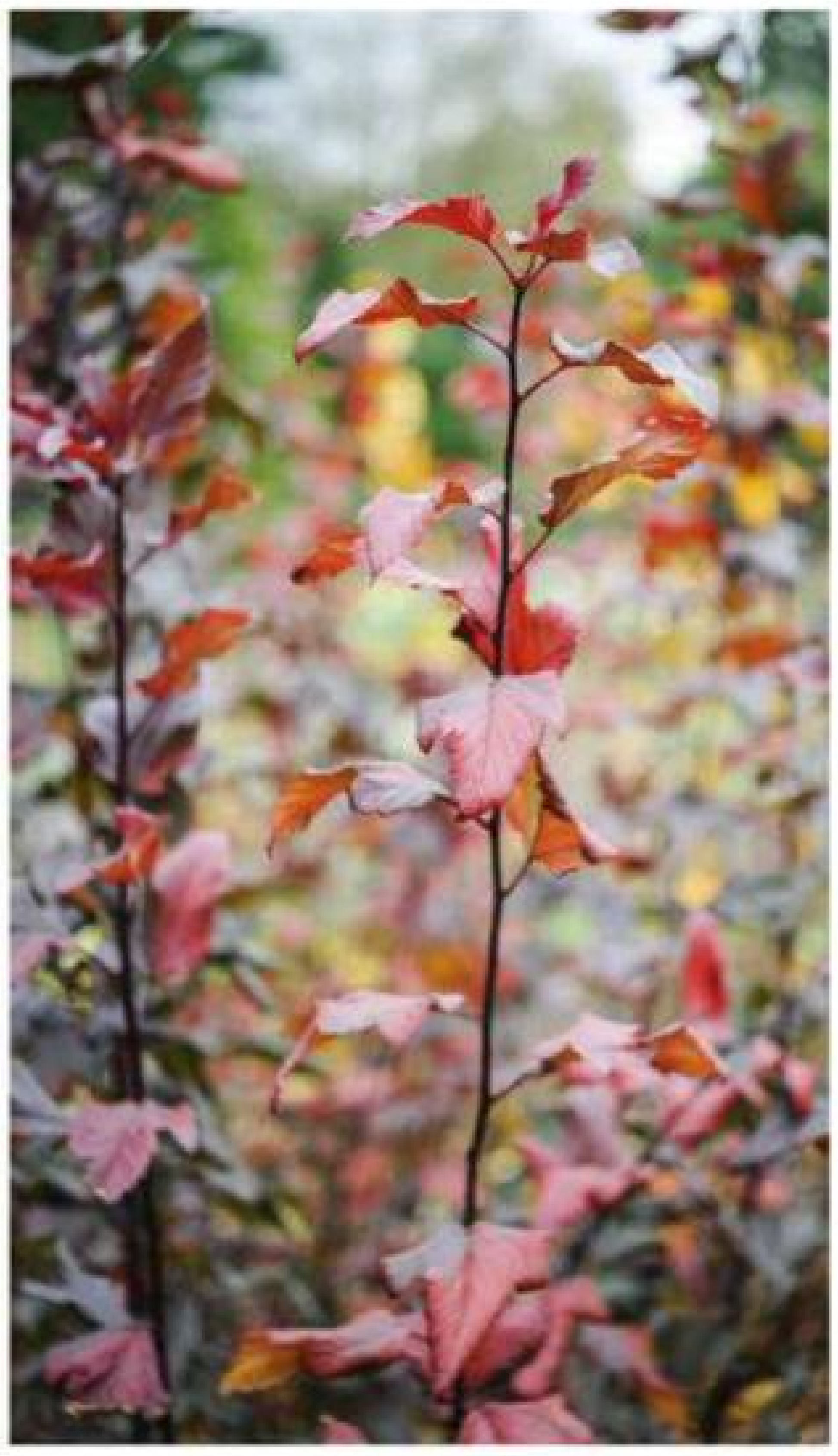
This shrubby spurge performed magnificently in a recent trial of *Euphorbia* at RHS Wisley and flowered almost continuously throughout the year. There was some doubt that this species would be hardy but it survived the duration of the trial (2013-2015). In its native Majora, it is restricted to limestone cliffs and appears as a critically endangered species on the International Union for Conservation of nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) Red List. Perhaps if more gardeners grow this amazing spurge it will be saved from its critical status.

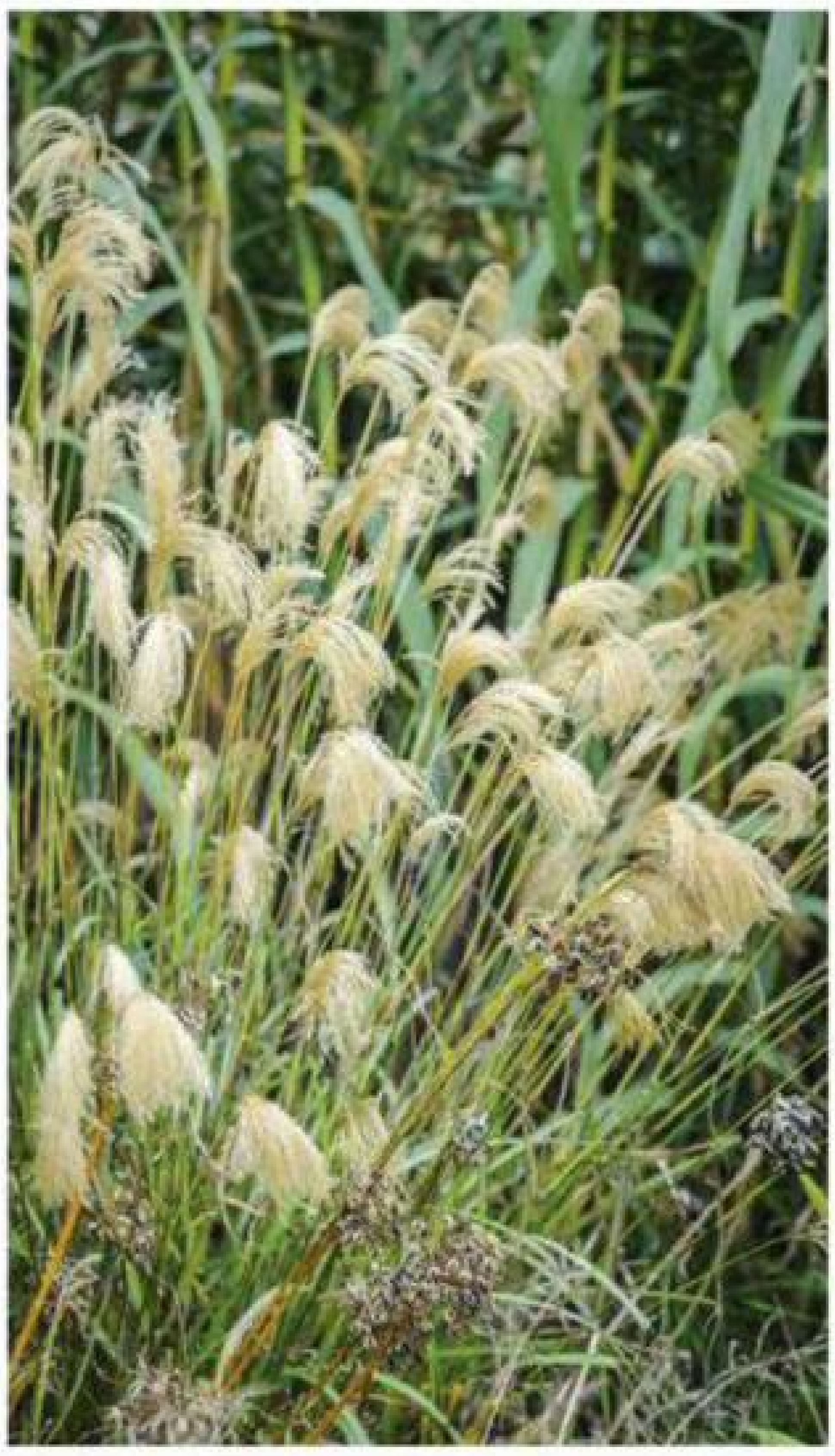
Height 1.2-1.5m.
Origin Majora.
Growing conditions Well-drained soil; sun.
Hardiness RHS H3-4.
Season of interest Year round.

Physocarpus opulifolius Lady in Red (= 'Tuilad')

In recent years there has been a proliferation of *Physocarpus opulifolius* cultivars with richly coloured foliage and stems. Currently, there is a trial of these deciduous shrubs at RHS Wisley where many of the recent introductions can be seen together. I have always loved Lady in Red, which has uplifting, bright-red, palmate foliage, corymbs of small, cream flowers and mahogany stems. In winter, backlit by the sun, its coloured stems and foliage can take on almost magical properties. AGM.

Height 1.5m.
Origin Eastern North America.
Growing conditions Moisture-retentive soil; sun.
Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 2b-8b.
Season of interest Spring to early winter.





Miscanthus nepalensis

This eulalia grass has to be the most elegant of this genus of ornamental grasses with its graceful pendent gold braids in late summer. It keeps its golden colour as winter approaches and appears bedecked with jewels when covered in morning dew. It is clump-forming and not invasive but sadly on my site it is not winter hardy, despite growing clones that are found at higher altitudes. It is probably the winter wet rather than the cold that determines its fate on my nursery but it is easily raised from seed and can be successfully grown in containers.

Height 1.5m.
Origin Nepal.
Growing conditions Well-drained, sheltered position in sun.
Hardiness RHS H6.
Season of interest Summer to winter.

Places to visit

Recommended places to see seasonal plants at their best

As winter approaches and the sun casts long shadows across gardens, coloured stems, the flowers and foliage of herbaceous plants and grasses shine out in all their majesty. Cobwebs defined by droplets of dew on misty mornings can create an ethereal atmosphere in naturalistic gardens where herbaceous perennials and ornamental grasses jostle together. Visit **Knoll Gardens** to experience a wide selection of grasses, perennials, shrubs and other unusual woody plants in its four-acre demonstration garden. This is a dynamic garden, ever changing and worth more than an annual visit. Knoll Gardens, Stapehill Road, Hampreston, Dorset BH21 7ND. Tel 01202 873931, knollgardens.co.uk

Knoll Gardens.

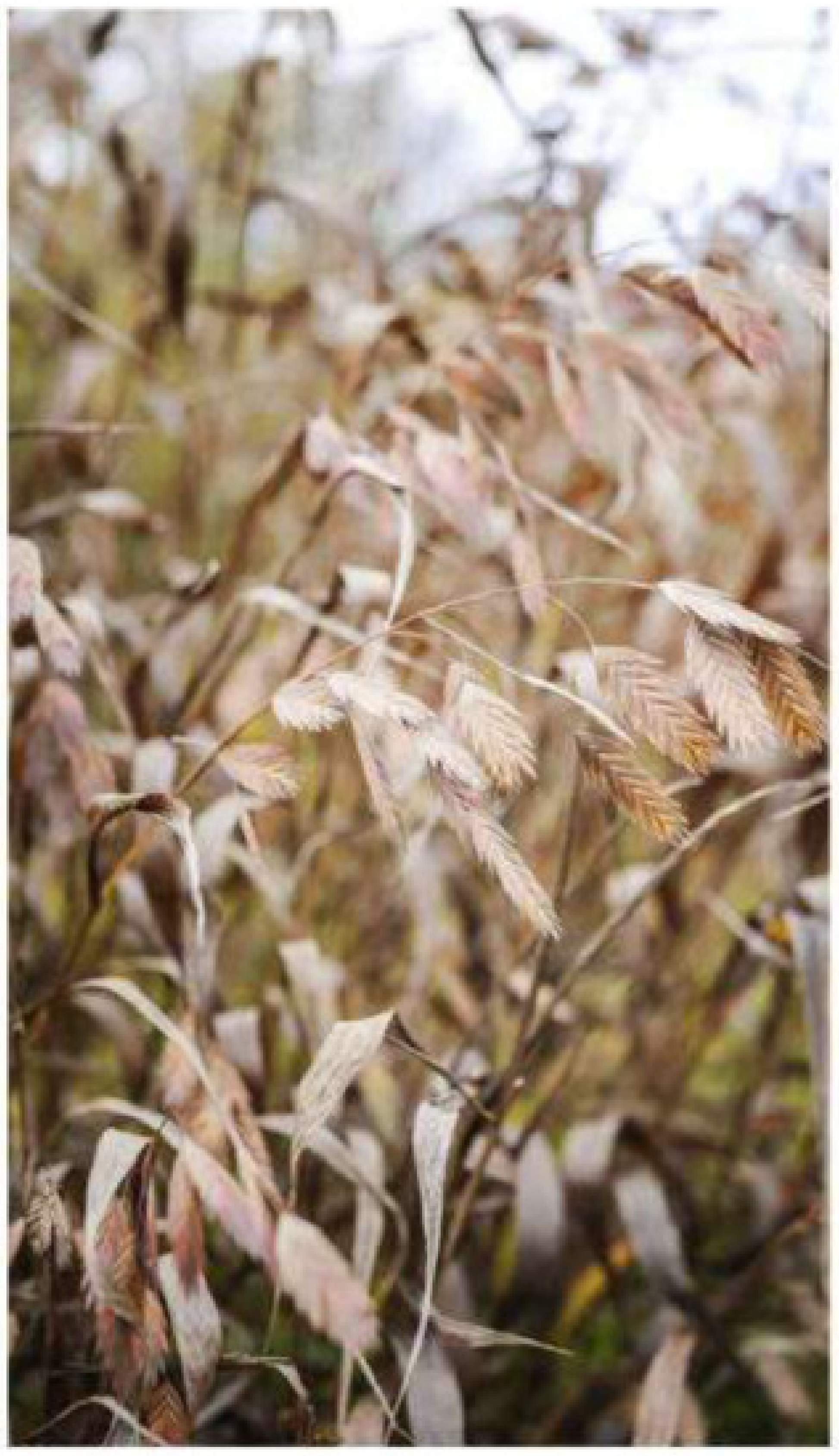
ROB WHITWORTH/GAPPHOTOS

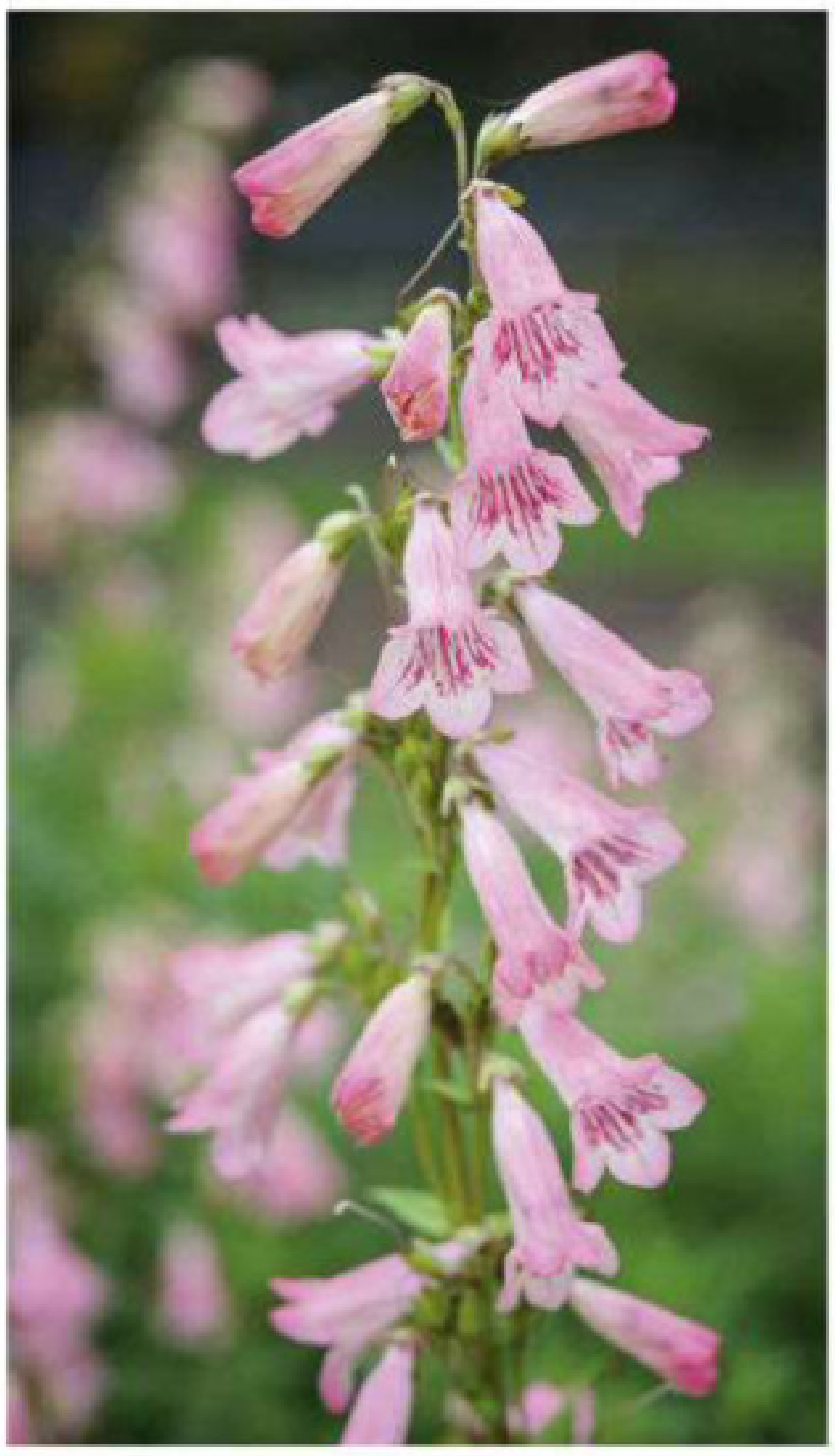
Spend just one day at **The Savill Garden** and you

Chasmanthium latifolium

In its native habitat, this woodland grass is usually found on banks of rivers and streams in light shade. Known colloquially as spangle grass, it resembles a flattened quaking grass and has an elegant arching habit. I have seen magnificent specimens but have never grown it well myself, perhaps growing it in too deep shade where the flower stems flopped. The foliage is rather like a small bamboo with broad blades and flowers that appear in late summer, starting green but bronze and purple tints suffuse the flowers and foliage as temperatures fall.

Height 90cm-1.2m.
Origin Southeast USA.
Growing conditions Moisture-retentive soil; dappled shade.
Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 4a-10b.
Season of interest Summer to early winter.





Penstemon 'Hidcote Pink'

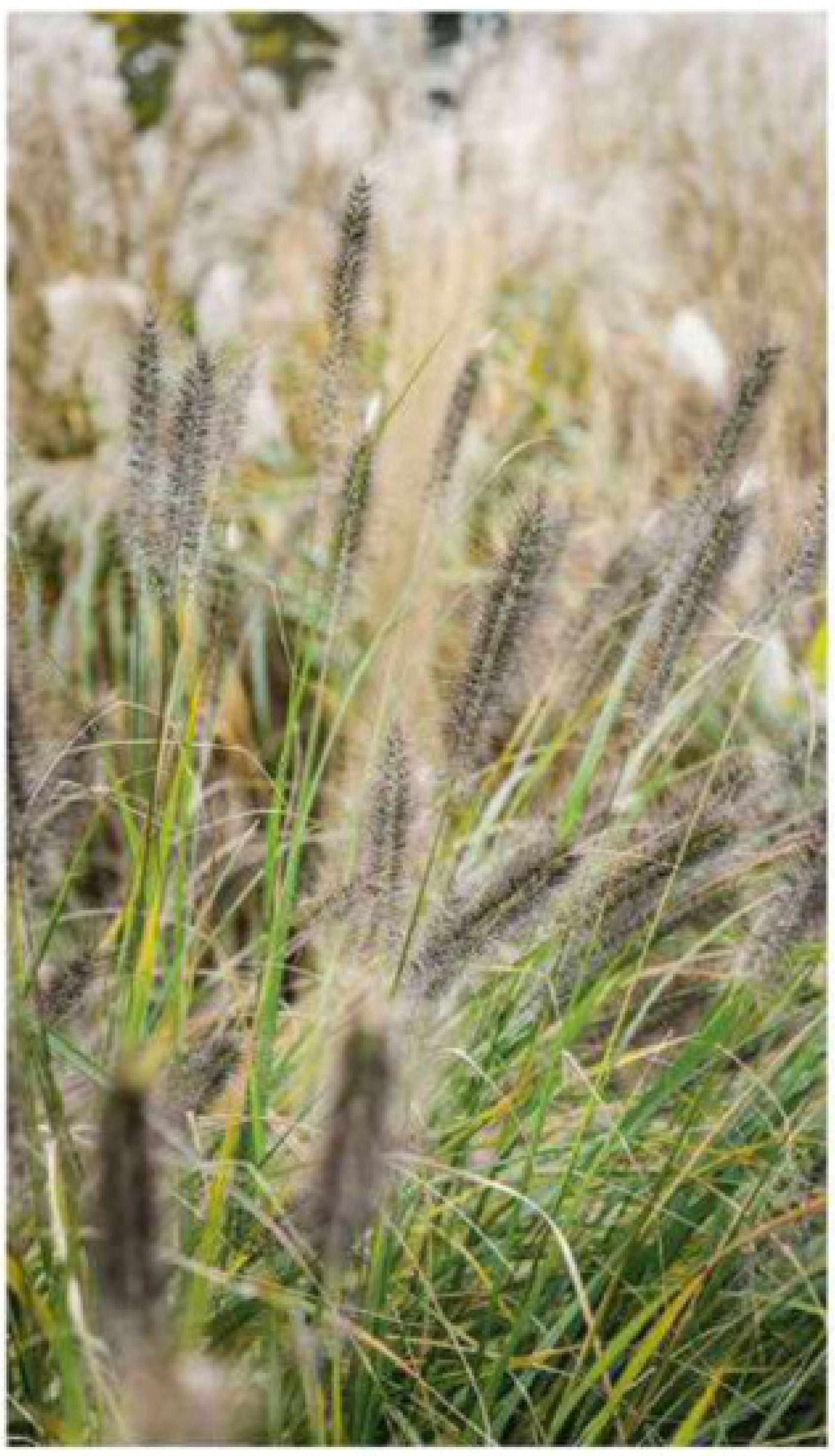
This was one of the first penstemons I grew commercially as it was long-lived, possessed good foliage with long spikes of slender, pink trumpets and darker pink guidelines for insects to follow to find nectar. I was surprised by its RHS hardiness rating as I found it as hardy as several other cultivars that have a value of H4 as long as it has reasonable drainage in winter. Many hardy penstemons have slender foliage but 'Hidcote Pink' has broader, pale-green leaves that are held horizontally from the stem. AGM.

Height 90cm.
Origin Cultivar grown at Hidcote Manor, Gloucestershire.
Growing conditions Well-drained soil; sun.
Hardiness RHS H3.
Season of interest Summer to early winter.

Pennisetum alopecuroides 'Red Head'

This is a recent cultivar, chosen for its early flowering and distinctly reddish bristly flower spikes. In the south of England many *Pennisetum alopecuroides* cultivars will bloom before cold weather inhibits the production of flower spikes but on heavier, colder soils the season is often not long enough to stimulate flower production. 'Red Head', however, is useful in these areas as it starts to flower much earlier and the attractive red spikes fade to purple and then buff as the season progresses.

Height 75-90cm.
Origin Asia.
Growing conditions Well-drained, moisture-retentive soil; sun or dappled shade.
Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 5a-9b.
Season of interest Summer to winter.



will be hard pushed to do justice to the 35 acre-site with its wonderful collections of woody plants, grasses and herbaceous borders. Winter beds provide plenty of interest throughout the colder months and the autumn wood is a blaze of colour until gales or heavy frosts denude the trees of their leaves. The Savill Garden, Crown Estate Office, The Great Park, Windsor, Berkshire SL4 2HT. windsorgreatpark.co.uk

The chance to see penstemons at their best this month is a good excuse to visit **RHS Wisley**. Wisley is full of amazing plants throughout the year – as well as an excellent source of gardening books – but the current trial, now in its final year, offers an excellent overview of the genus. Last year Portsmouth Field, where the trial is based, was still looking magnificent in November as there hadn't been any severe frosts. A separate trial of *Stipa* and its allies is also in its final season with majestic *Stipa gigantea* and *Stipa pseudoichu* looking impressive throughout early winter. RHS Garden Wisley, Woking, Surrey GU23 6QB. Tel 0845 260 9000. rhs.org.uk

The Savill Garden.

FIONA McLEOD/GAPPHOTOS

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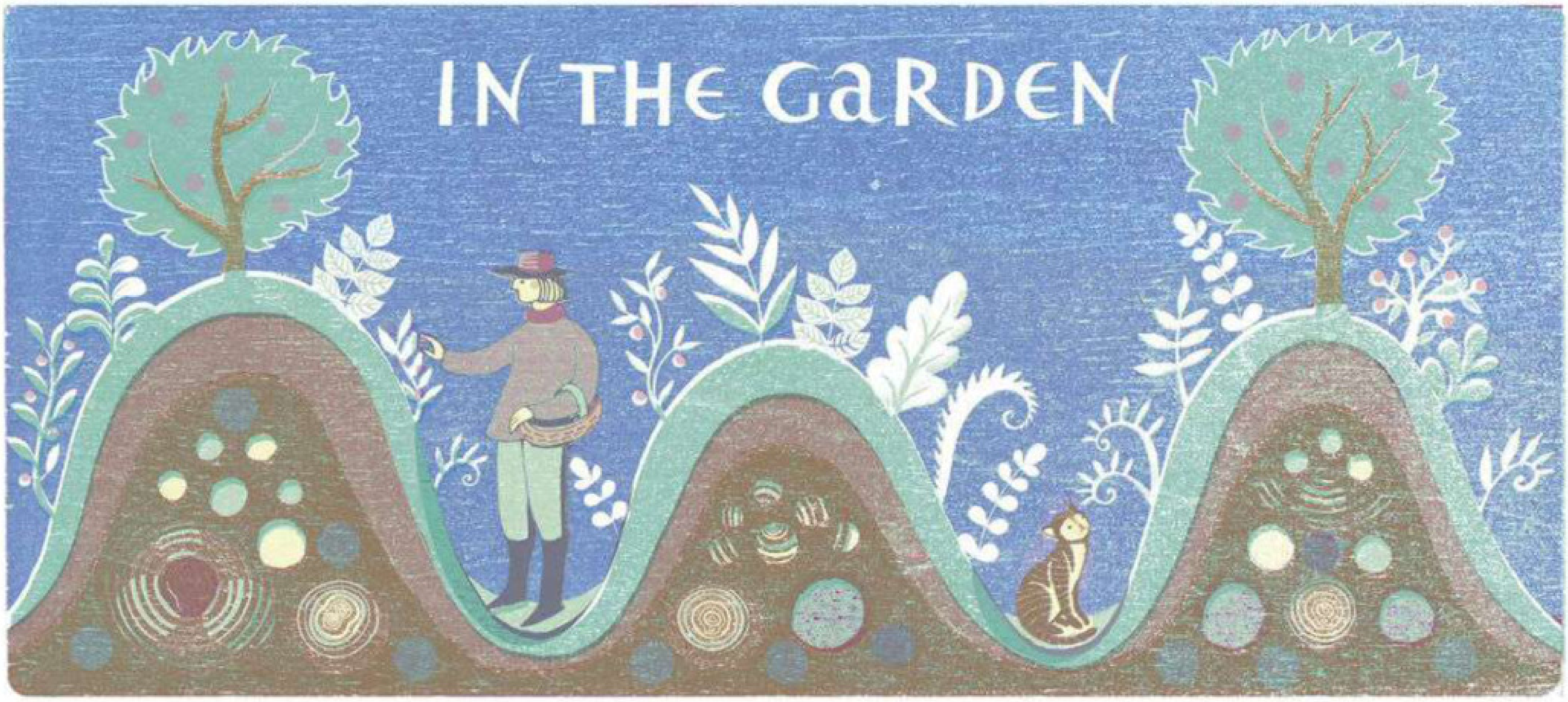

As she readies her allotment for winter, Jojo decides not to burn her excess garden waste, but to use it to build *hügelkultur* beds instead

WORDS **JOJO TULLOH** ILLUSTRATIONS **SARAH YOUNG**

November is time for making good on the allotment. On fine, crisp days it is invigorating to be working hard outside and while there are still crops to sow (onions, garlic) many jobs are stimulated by a desire to tidy up for winter – cleaning tools and dealing with overgrown corners of the garden. Here, there is plenty of work to be done: cutting down unwanted saplings, pruning and removing withered green material from the beds. All this can leave you with a large amount of garden waste. But before you cart it off to the municipal dump, consider making a *hügelkultur* (or hill culture) bed. This permaculture technique was popularised in the 1970s by German horticulturists Hans Beba and Hermann Andrä, but the idea is an ancient one. It's easy enough to understand if you imagine the way a forest floor is in a constant state of decomposition and regeneration. It works by piling up compost and topsoil on top of soil, which is itself on top of rotting wood. Not only does this method raise the heat of the soil – extending your growing season – but as the wood decomposes it releases nutrients, increases soil aeration and also holds water well so you need to do far less feeding and irrigating. You can make the hill beds (also known as a *hügelbeets*) as big or as small as you like.

A tall, steep-sided *hügelbeet* means you don't need to stoop down to harvest crops, there's less chance of soil compaction and it also has the advantage of giving you an increased growing area, making it ideal for smaller gardens where space is limited. The bottom layer is thick, hard wood logs and twigs, the second straw or dried leaves, then compost, then topsoil. A wide variety of materials – cardboard, mulch, chicken droppings, seaweed compost, green leaves, straw – can be added, watering in the layers as you go. You can edge each *hügelbeet* with hazel poles, rocks, tree stumps or just leave them gradually sloping – the place where the edge of the bed meets the flat earth will be particularly rich in nutrients (run off) so consider planting hungry plants, such as squash and cucumbers, here. If you are converting an area of lawn into a raised bed, dig down 30cm and layer the logs on to the soil. For the first couple of years, freshly cut wood (but not rotten wood) will release nitrogen into the soil, so start with plants that need plenty of nitrogen, such as potatoes, tomatoes, berries, beans and salad greens.

If you're clearing a lot of woody material you should consider buying yourself a billhook. This ancient tool beloved of woodsmen looks like a cleaver with a wicked hook and is ideal for coppicing work. The firm of A Morris & Sons of Dunsford has been making billhooks at its mill on the edge of Dartmoor since 1931, and you can find a good selection to buy at Timeless Tools (timelesstools.co.uk) and Malvern Coppicing (Tel 01684 574865, malverncoppicing.co.uk). ▷

WHAT TO DO NOW

Check your cabbages and chicories and remove any yellowing or rotting outer leaves, as these will harbour slugs. Gently tease apart the hearts of the chicory where slugs also lurk. For sweeter, paler leaves, blanch the odd chicory or dandelion by covering with a flowerpot, with a rock over the hole, and remove this after a week. Protect your celeriac crop with straw, and mulch tender crops, such as artichokes and asparagus, that have died back into the ground (fresh seaweed is good as it both protects and feeds). After the first frost, dig parsnips. Now is a good time to plant broad beans, this ancient staple food is a key plant for anyone really trying to feed their family from their garden, as the beans can be eaten fresh or dried and used throughout the year. The traditional cultivar 'Aquadulce Longpod' (realseeds.co.uk) has long, pale-green pods with large flat beans. It gets going quickly and if planted now the plants will be smaller and hardier and more resistant to blackfly in the spring. The beans are quite early and should crop well before peas, and any that grow too large can be left to blacken and split on the plant before harvesting to use as dried. I love them puréed with pancetta.

IN THE KITCHEN

Butternut squash may be the best known, but the squash family has an almost infinite variety of shapes, sizes, textures and flavours. Versatility is their keynote, being good roasted, puréed, used in soups, turnovers, curries or even pies. The terminology can also cause confusion, as squash can refer to a winter-storing type or summer squashes, which are picked and eaten in the same way as a courgette. Here are some of my favourite winter squashes, good to eat now.

Cucurbita maxima 'Uchiki Kuri', also known as Hokkaido or red onion squash, is an orange-skinned, Japanese cultivar that is among the earliest and easiest to grow. It has a rich, sweet flavour so works well in recipes where it is the star ingredient, such as these squash turnovers. Toss 400g of cubed squash in olive oil and salt and roast at 180°C until just tender but not soft. Meanwhile, peel and boil a medium potato until just soft and cube. Chop a medium onion and a clove of garlic and sweat in butter until soft then stir in half a teaspoon of mustard seeds, and a couple of small dried chillies. Cook for another minute then combine with the roasted squash and potato, allow the mixture to cool before wrapping up in saucer-sized circles of short crust pastry (350g is plenty) folding over and sealing edges with egg wash as you would a Cornish pasty, paint with egg wash and bake at 180°C for 30 minutes or until golden brown. You can vary this mixture by using a leek and a little fresh chopped sage instead of onion and spices.

USEFUL COOKERY TIP

No. 11 *Rosemary oil*

Finely chop rosemary leaves and flowers and push down into a bottle of olive oil to make this aromatic oil. Use when you cook onions and garlic as the base for soups and stews.

Cucurbita maxima 'Boston Squash', an ultra-early hubbard squash with bulbous orange fruits, can get really big so you may want to cut it into slices and freeze what you can't eat immediately. Its flesh is mealy but very good when cooked into a purée. Start by sweating a chopped shallot and a crushed clove of garlic in a little olive oil and butter. Once a good garlicky aroma comes from the pan, add the cubed flesh of 450g squash, salt and a small bundle of thyme. Cook gently, with the lid half on, and only add water if the mixture starts to stick. When the flesh has broken down to a smooth purée, stir in 75ml of thick cream, season, and serve with roasted meats.

Cucurbita pepo var *turbinata*, or acorn squash, is a heart-shaped squash that's almost too beautiful to eat. I grow a gently fluted, pale-ivory coloured cultivar called 'Thelma Sanders Sweet Potato' but they come in greens and blues too. It needs little more attention than splitting in half or quarters, baking at 180°C for 30-45 minutes, then dressing with butter, salt and black pepper, and, either something sweet, such as honey, or a little grated parmesan. ☐

RECIPES

Kythoni glyko

Glyko, or Greek spoon sweets, are fruits preserved in a loose jam. The Greek tradition of serving these spoon sweets – a spoonful is served in a saucer to each guest – with afternoon coffee is one worth adopting; they're perfect for when you crave just a little something sweet. While most *glyko* (grape, cherry or lemon blossom) are made in warmer months, this quince version is ideal to make right now.

3 golden quinces, and an equal weight of unbleached caster sugar, 150ml water, small tied bunch *Pelargonium graveolens* leaves. Wipe the felty grey fuzz off the quinces with a cloth, then peel, core and cut them into cubes, matchsticks or grate as you prefer. Place these in a bowl of acidulated water (water with 1tsp of lemon juice added) to prevent discolouring. Strain the fruit and weigh it, then measure an equal quantity of caster sugar to the fruit. Put the fruit in large, non-reactive pan and scatter over the sugar. Add the water and simmer, half covered, for 20 minutes. Add a small bunch of scented pelargonium (*Pelargonium graveolens*) leaves – a popular aromatic herb in Greece where it is known as *arbaroriza* – and simmer for a further 20 minutes (it may take longer). Skim off any scum and when the fruit has a deep-orange colour and a jammy consistency, use a thermometer to see that the setting point (105°C) has been reached. Remove the leaves and allow the fruit to cool before straining into sterilised jars.

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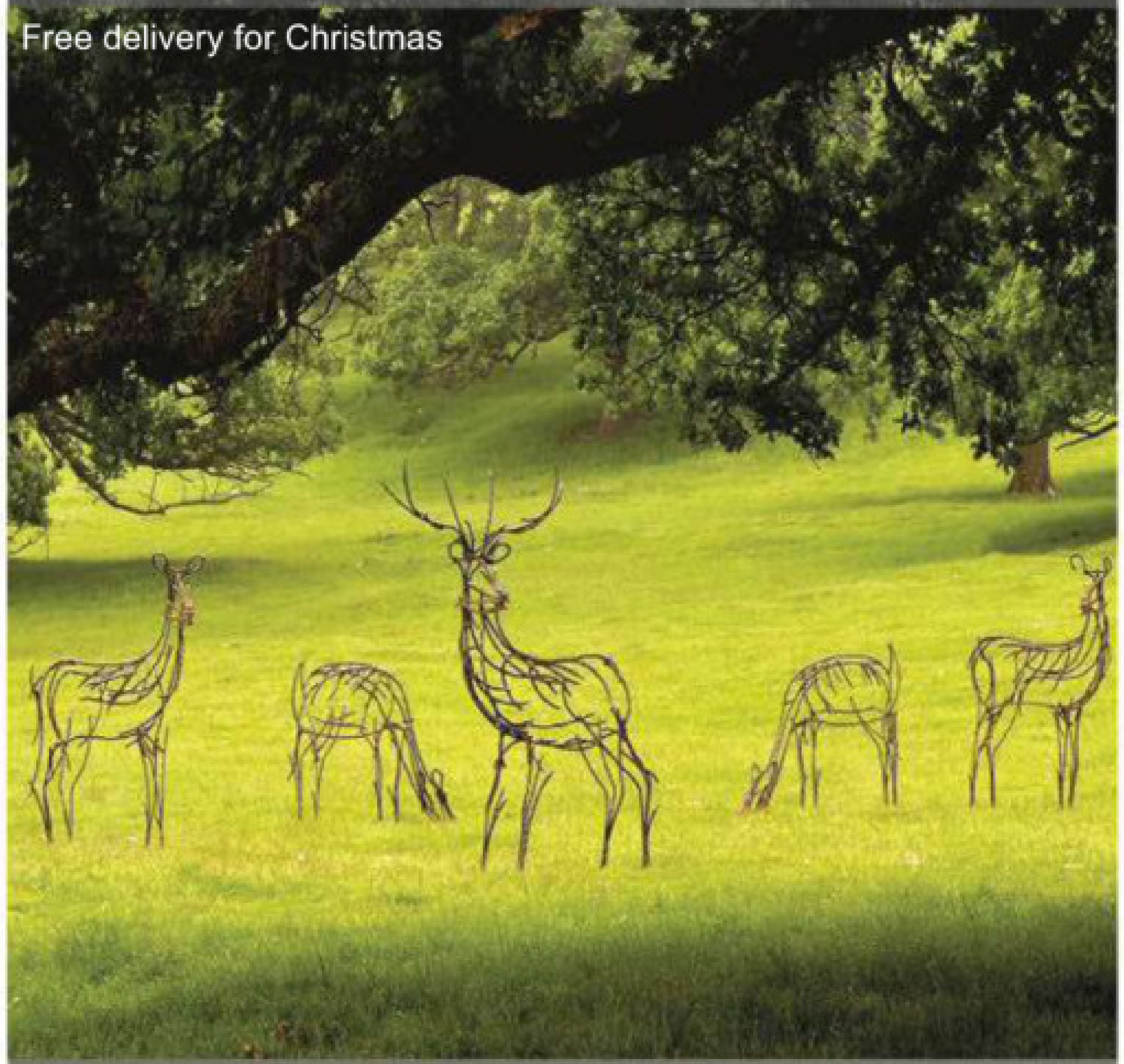

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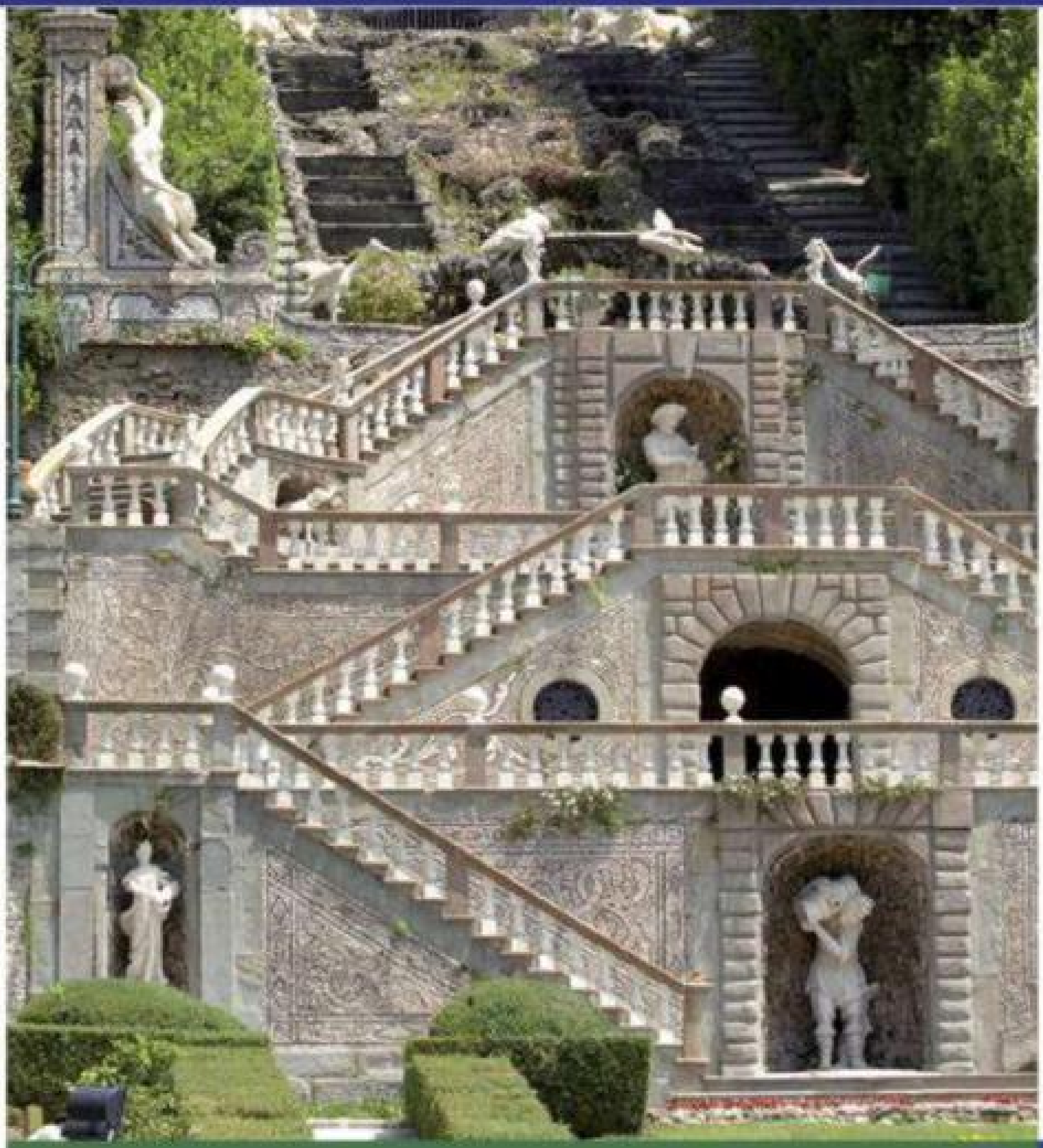

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PORTRAIT ANDREW MONTGOMERY

First plant love The bearded irises that still fill my mother's small garden in Oxford made a big impression on me as a child. So much so that, aged ten, I secretly dug some up to plant in the school car park.

Who has inspired your career the most? Family friend and gardener, Victoria Parkhouse has been a constant encouragement. When I was a weedy 14-year-old, Vicky gave me my first taste of horticulture when I was on work experience at Cotswold Garden Flowers.

Favourite garden Working somewhere can completely change your appreciation of a place. Derek Jarman's Prospect Cottage at Dungeness, on the Kent coast, formed the focus of my university dissertation but it was later, while helping in the garden, that I really fell in love with this unique landscape.

Dream plant destination I have never made it to the Burren in west Ireland, a unique geology and flora relatively close to home. However, I do dream of alpine meadows in Georgia and conifers in California… whatever the destination, seeing plants in the wild is invaluable.

Biggest challenges facing gardeners today Gardeners are tied to Nature's rhythms and resist the instantaneous expectations of a digital age. The challenge is adapting to a society that is increasingly urban and online, whilst retaining integrity of knowledge and a sincere passion for the natural world.

What heartens you about our attitudes to horticulture today? It is tempting to be cynical in the face of funding cuts, skills gaps, changing climate (the list goes on…) but somehow in the garden one cannot help but be optimistic. Gardens, like art, have the power to transform the way we look at the world.

Favourite gardens blogs or books. Derek Jarman's *Modern Nature* is beautifully written and one I return to repeatedly. I do not follow many blogs but Ian Young's of the Scottish Rock Garden Club is fantastic. As is Plinth et al for a more artistic angle.

Unsung plant hero Municipal shrubs such as *Cotoneaster horizontalis* – never judge a plant by its reputation but by how it performs in the garden. When pruned well it provides graceful structure, while its flowers bring it to life with bees. Bright berries follow in autumn and dusted with hoar frost it can be a star of the winter garden. □

Contact jbruce210@googlemail.com

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Kingpins of the castle
At Kasteel Geldrop, planting designer John Schoolmeesters and project manager Cill Neggers have masterminded the creation of a charming and idiosyncratic garden that the whole community can enjoy
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GARDENS
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In brief

Name Kasteel Geldrop.
What Walled community flower garden.
Points of interest Plants chosen for winter form as much as colour. In summer roses intermingled with perennials.
Where Geldrop, near Eindhoven, the Netherlands.
Size 4,000 square metres.
Soil Sandy, with a layer of clay beneath.
Climate Mild and wet.
Hardiness rating USDA 9.

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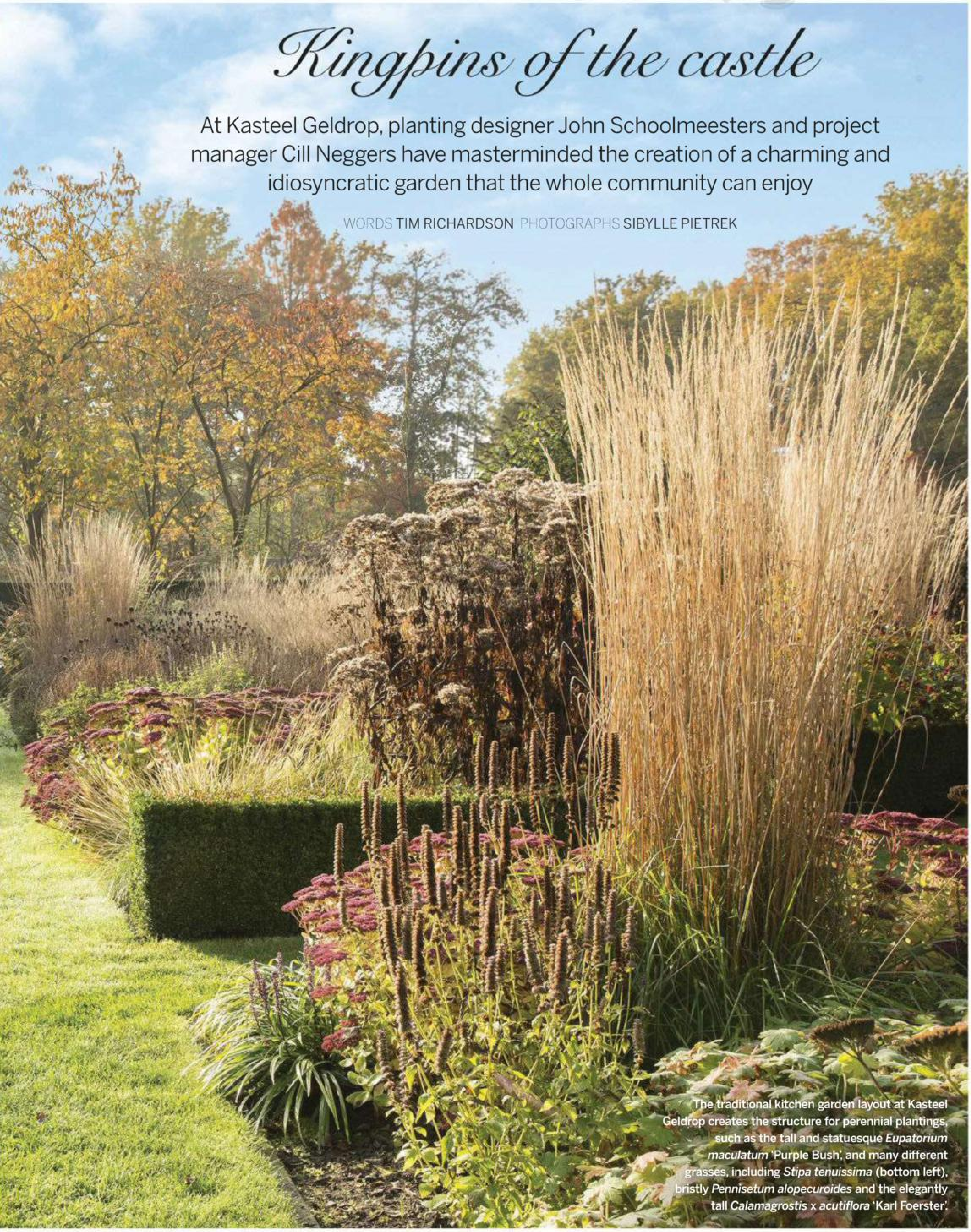
Kingpins of the castle

At Kasteel Geldrop, planting designer John Schoolmeesters and project manager Cill Neggers have masterminded the creation of a charming and idiosyncratic garden that the whole community can enjoy

WORDS **TIM RICHARDSON** PHOTOGRAPHS **SIBYLLE PIETREK**



The traditional kitchen garden layout at Kasteel Geldrop creates the structure for perennial plantings, such as the tall and statuesque *Eupatorium maculatum* 'Purple Bush', and many different grasses, including *Stipa tenuissima* (bottom left), bristly *Pennisetum alopecuroides* and the elegantly tall *Calamagrostis x acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster'.

In summer it is John's beloved roses that are the star turn, while in autumn he allows grasses, such as *Deschampsia cespitosa* 'Goldschleier' (far left), and a mix of perennials to take centre stage.

Geldrop is a well-appointed little town on the outskirts of Eindhoven in the Netherlands, which boasts its own castle – not a fortress, but a largely 19th-century house set in a 27-acre wooded estate. In the 1970s it was bought by the town council, which maintained the garden until 1996 when it was passed on to a charitable foundation. In 2001 the Foundation decided to transform the castle's 4,000 square-metre walled garden into a flower garden for the community and tasked rose-grower John Schoolmeesters and his wife Cill with the transformation. Over the past 15 years the couple have created a simple symmetrical plan of beds, where local people of all ages can feel safe and secure amid the burgeoning plantings. I talked to John about the garden's inspiration and evolution.

When did you first hear about the garden at Kasteel Geldrop?

My wife Cill first visited in 1995 when the walled garden was not exactly abandoned – but left to itself. We had a rose company then, so we did a design for a new rose garden and sent it to Geldrop Town Council. They wrote back to say they already had a project-management team who had a great plan – so we put our design in the attic. Then in 2001 the chair of the Foundation Kasteel Geldrop called us and said, "I heard you had a plan".

What was the garden like when you arrived?

It was a vegetable garden run by local people – like allotments. The Foundation was very clear that they wanted a flower garden. But then they said they had no money.

No money? Did they not pay you?

No. To begin with they paid my wife only, as project manager. There was no money for plants, so we traded coffee coupons on the internet for seeds. I had a nursery background so I knew you could start a garden just by sowing seeds. Gradually, local people came to us with plants. The six amelanchiers that run down the middle of the garden were a gift from a couple celebrating their silver wedding. Then in 2004 this guy turned up and said he

To continue turn to page 40 ▷

John's tips for low-maintenance borders

1 Try to select plants that will thrive in your garden with the help of rainfall alone. Avoid plants that need watering, staking or are prone to disease.

2 Choose plants not by their colour but on the basis of form. Think about spires, stars and balls. If there is enough variation in form, then plants will look good how ever you place them.

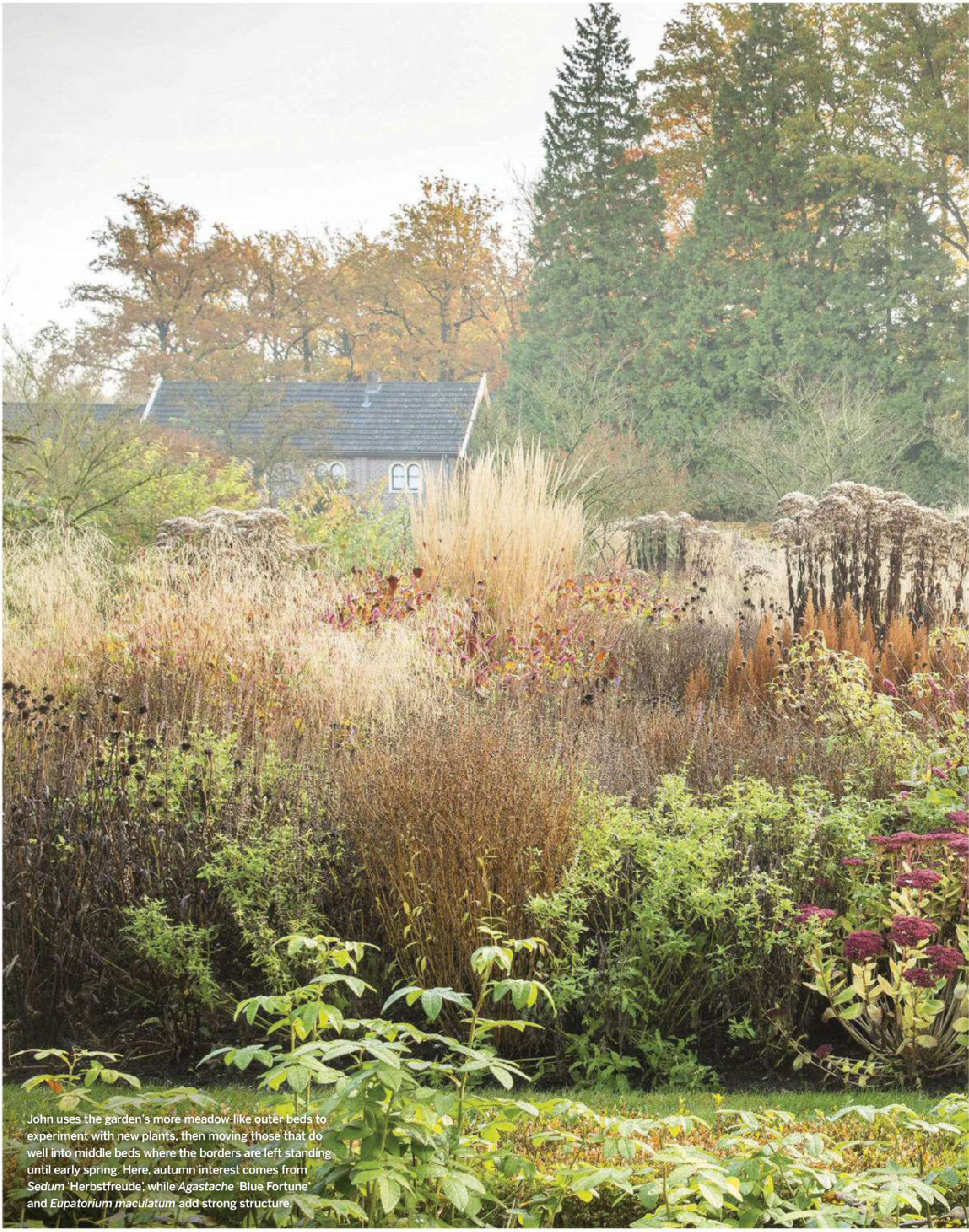
3 A good rule of thumb is to choose plants for that look good in winter. That way you know the forms will work.

4 If plants are not working for some reason, don't worry – just dig them up and replace them. This is how gardens develop.

5 If you have a small garden, this style can work, but you have to choose smaller plants: sesleria, deschampsia, and smaller cultivars of salvia and anemone. It can still get too big very quickly.

In a quiet corner, a colourful *Hydrangea macrophylla* 'Mariesii Perfecta' draws the eye to a large sundial – a gift from a local swimwear company that now sponsors the whole garden.

For visitors who stop to rest on the bench, the dark-red spires of *Persicaria amplexicaulis* Taurus (= 'Blotau') offer some lively colour among the russet grasses and dark-brown seedheads.



John uses the garden's more meadow-like outer beds to experiment with new plants, then moving those that do well into middle beds where the borders are left standing until early spring. Here, autumn interest comes from *Sedum* 'Herbstfreude', while *Agastache* 'Blue Fortune' and *Eupatorium maculatum* add strong structure.

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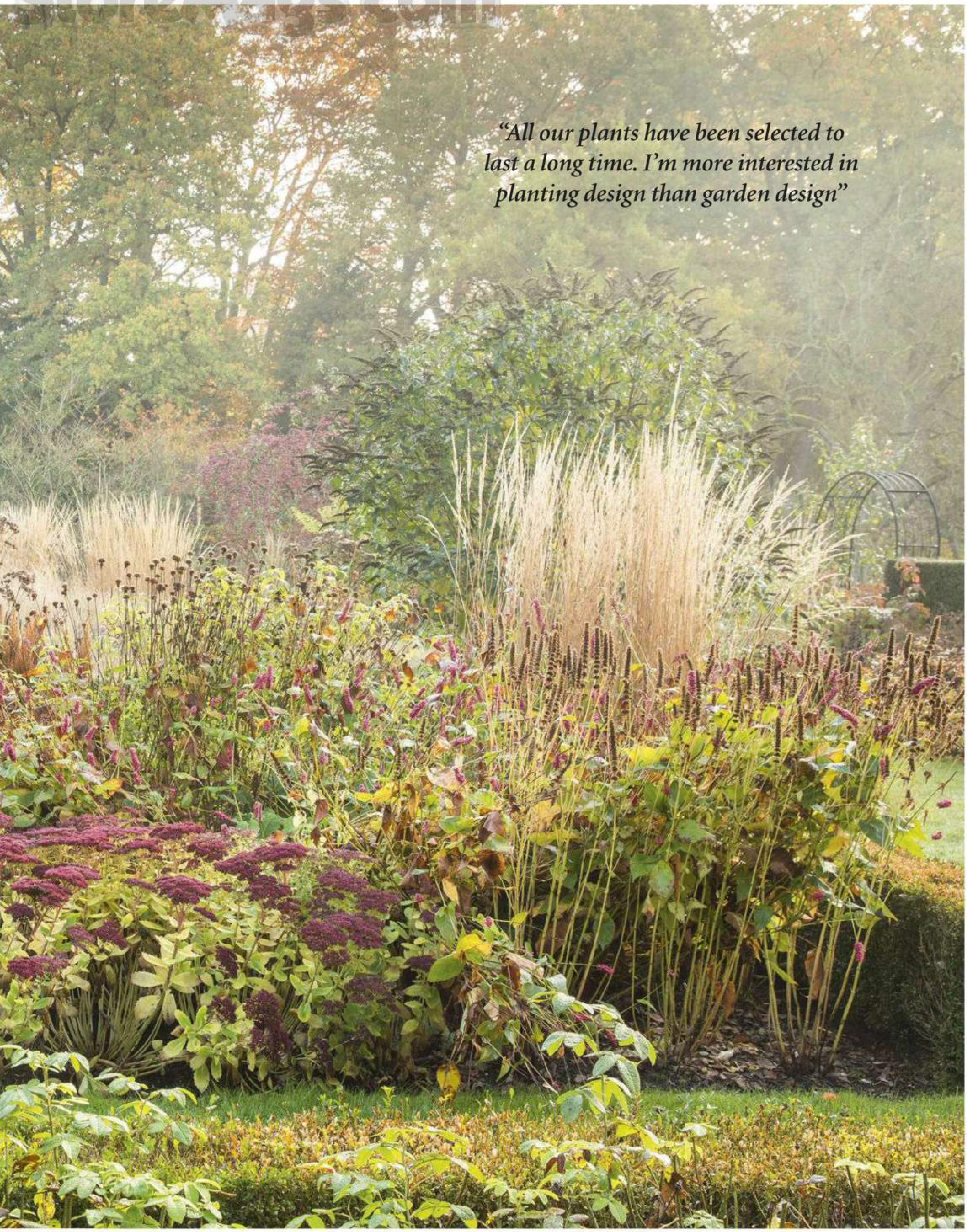

“All our plants have been selected to last a long time. I’m more interested in planting design than garden design”

The rigour of clipped box hedges and neatly mown pathways is offset by the soft textures of grasses, such as *Deschampsia cespitosa* 'Goldschleier', and the faded plumes of *Astilbe chinensis* var. *taquetii* 'Superba'.

▷ had a sundial to give us. It turned out he was the designer of the sundial and when he came back a week later he told us the sundial was a gift from Tweka, a local swimwear manufacturer, and that if we told their director what our plans for the garden would cost, they would sponsor it. And they did.

How did you develop the garden?

We started by sowing a lawn. We thought that if we have a lawn, we can start taking pieces out to make beds. Five years ago the last piece disappeared. In 2010 a garden company in Geldrop closed down, and its owner gave us all his stock; that made a big difference.

How do you run the garden now?

Cill is project manager and I do the planting design. We both get paid and we have 12 volunteers who each come for two to three hours a week. It's not much – but enough. There is a lot of work in spring, but in summer the garden takes care of itself. This is the lowest lying area for miles and the soil is very moist. We never have to water anything. And, as it was a vegetable garden for 100 years, it was regularly composted, so everything grows really well. We have very close contact with visitors – we talk to them and walk them round the garden.

> *"The trick is to use a set of plants that all require the same maintenance. If you choose the right plants, gardening doesn't have to be difficult"*

What is your gardening philosophy?

We are really inspired by Piet Oudolf and we use all his lovely plants. So it's grasses and perennials – but with lots of roses. We have found that only the old ones – the gallicas, the bourbons, the shrub roses – survive.

What would you say are your key plants?

Salvia nemorosa 'Amethyst', *Monarda didyma* 'Alba', eupatoriums, persicarias, echinops, eryngiums, rudbeckias – all these typical strong plants. We also use a lot of annuals, such as zinnias, ageratums and especially *Ammi majus*. All our plants have been selected to last a long time. I'm more interested in planting design than garden design.

Are there plants you use to set the rhythm?

For that we use *Calamagrostis* x *acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster', as well as eupatoriums, yellow achilleas and veronicastrums.

What do you hope visitors take away from the garden?

A sense of how easy gardening can be. The trick is to use a set of plants that all require the same maintenance. I go to so many gardens where all the plants have different requirements, and it's so complicated. If you choose the right plants, gardening doesn't have to be difficult. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Address Mierloseweg 1, 5662 Geldrop,
the Netherlands.
Tel +31 (0)40 280 1230.
Website kasteelgeldrop.nl
Open Every day. Admission free.

Turn the page for John's favourite autumn plants ▷

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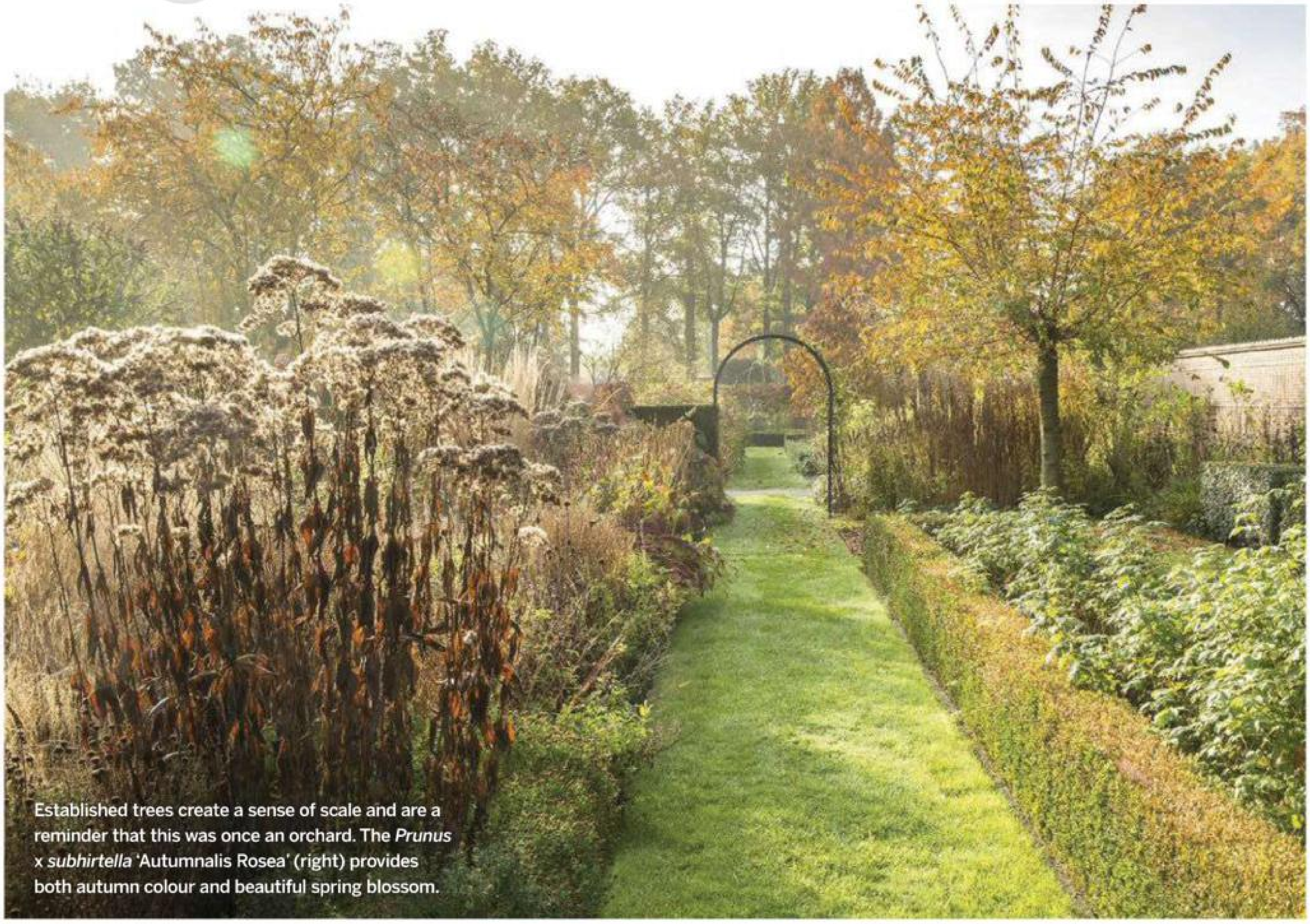
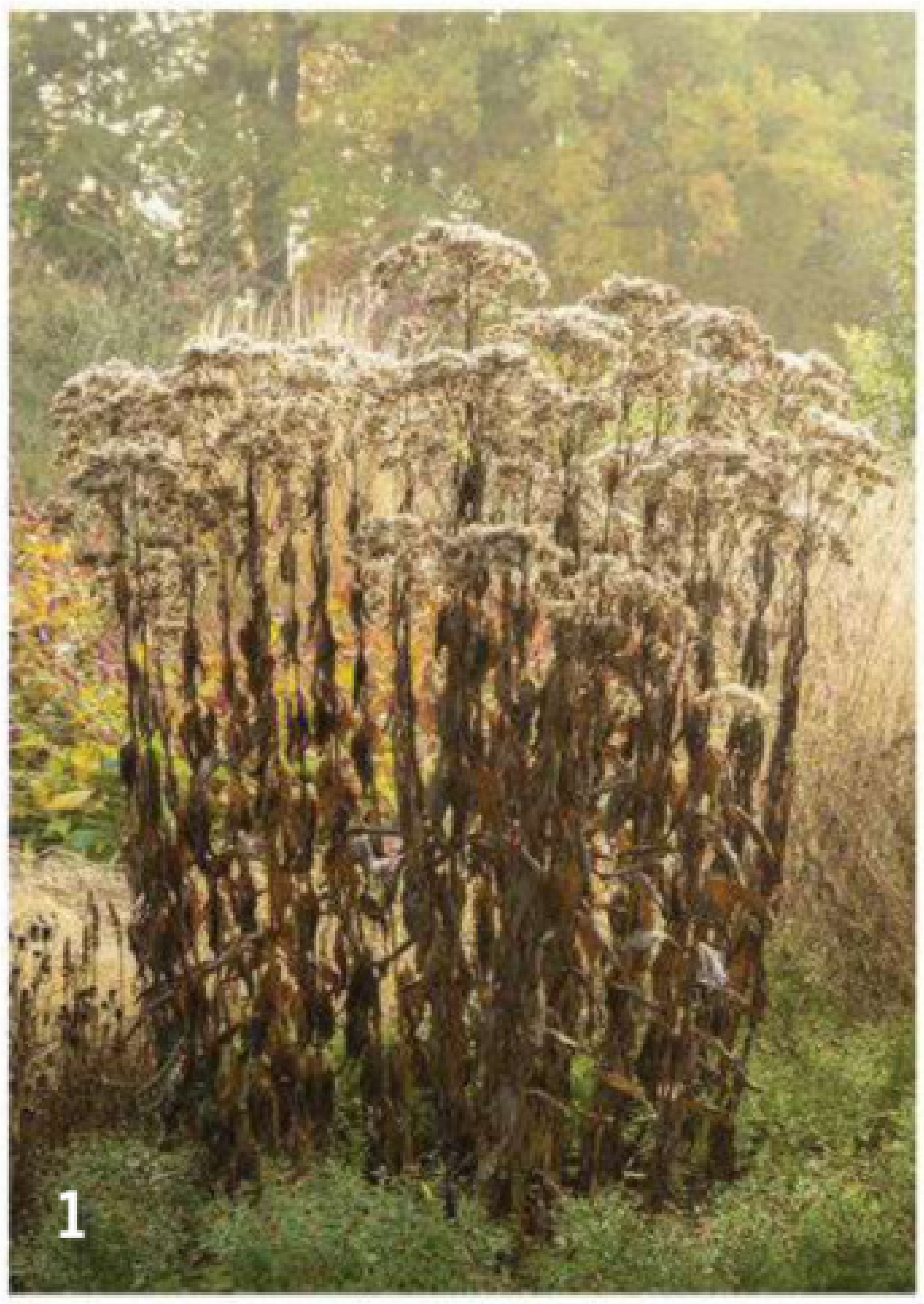


Established trees create a sense of scale and are a reminder that this was once an orchard. The *Prunus x subhirtella* 'Autumnalis Rosea' (right) provides both autumn colour and beautiful spring blossom.

The impressive looking glasshouse, which John uses to raise young plants, sits across a brick path from what was originally a gardeners' bothy but is now home to a rather chic café.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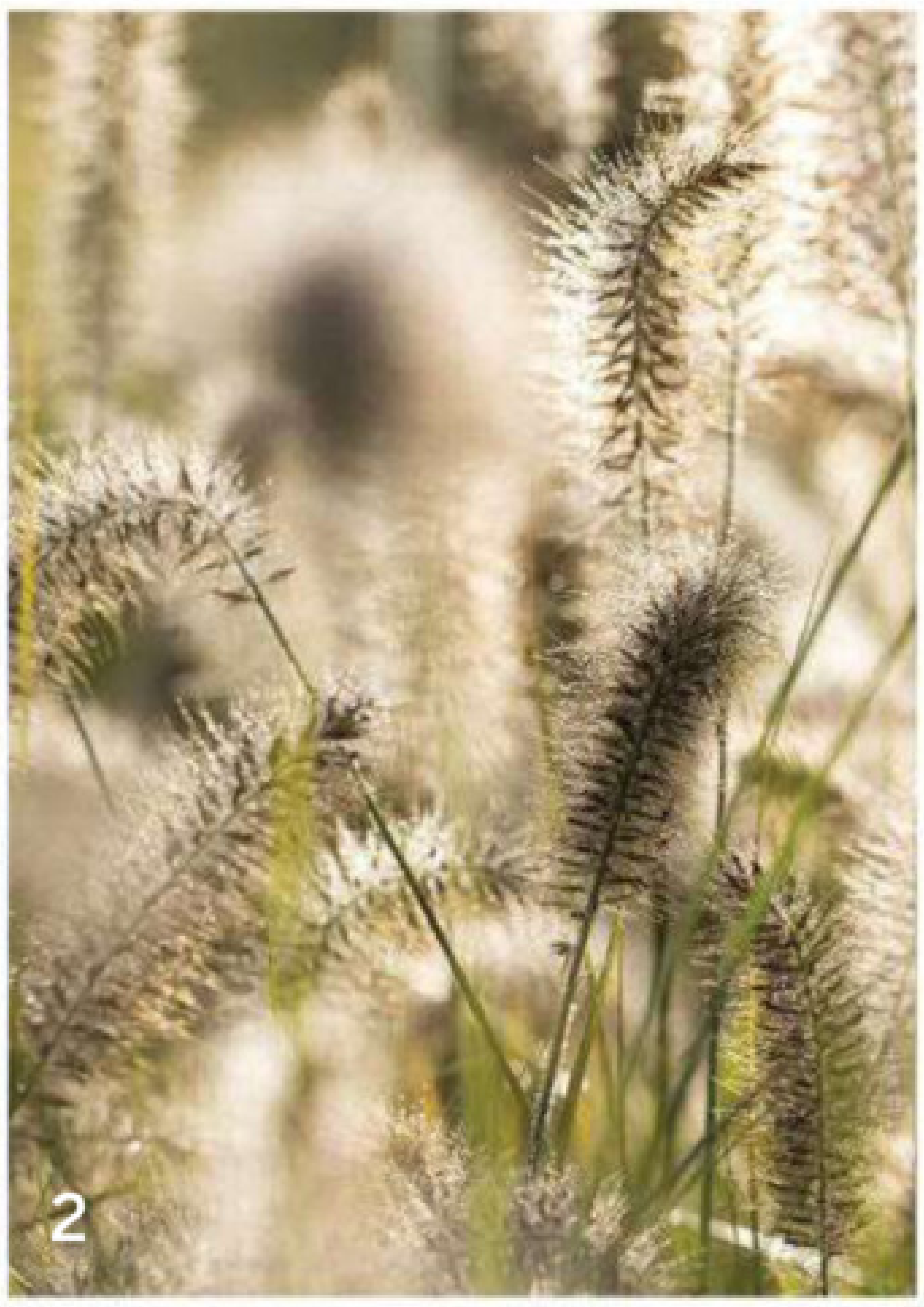
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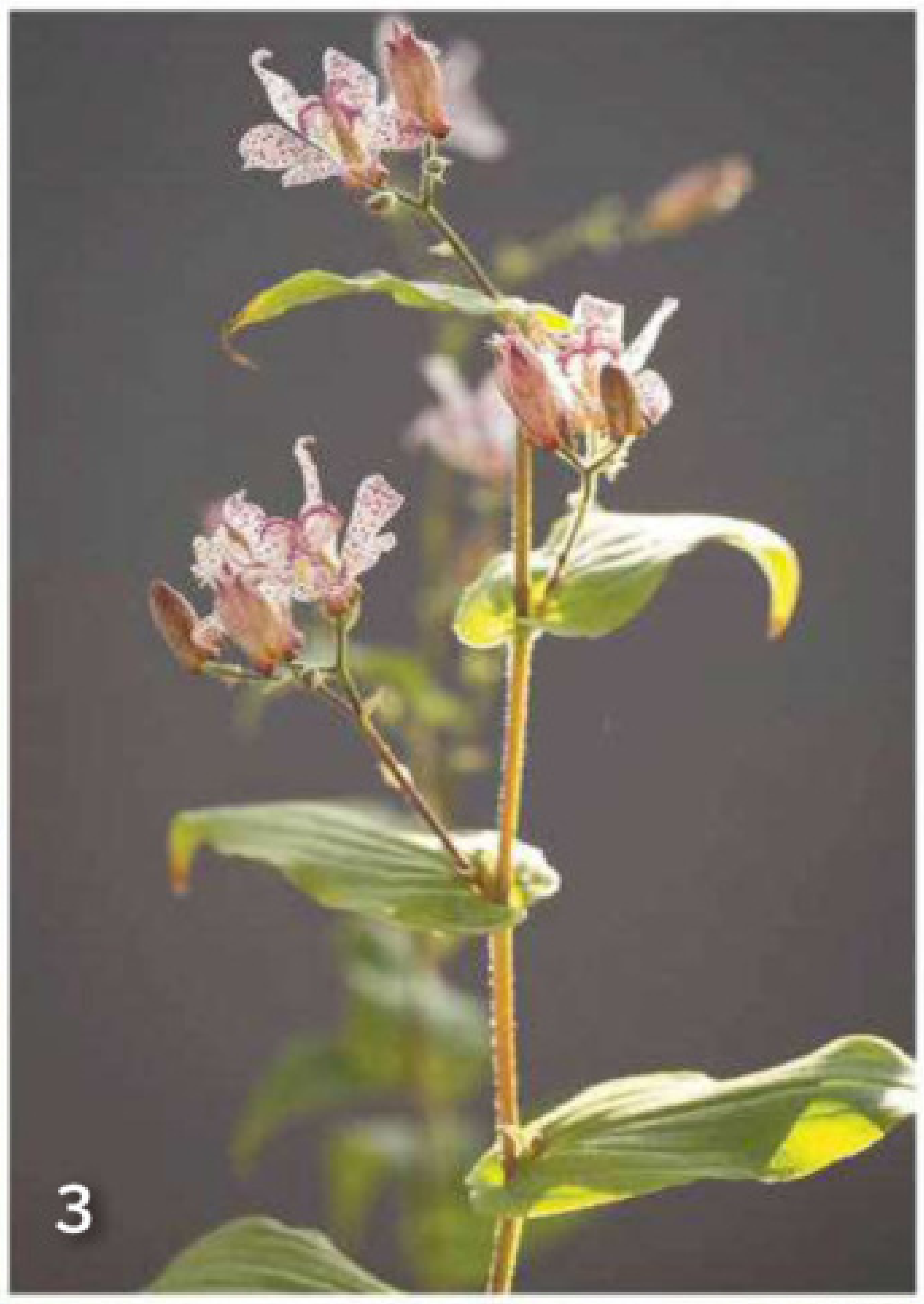
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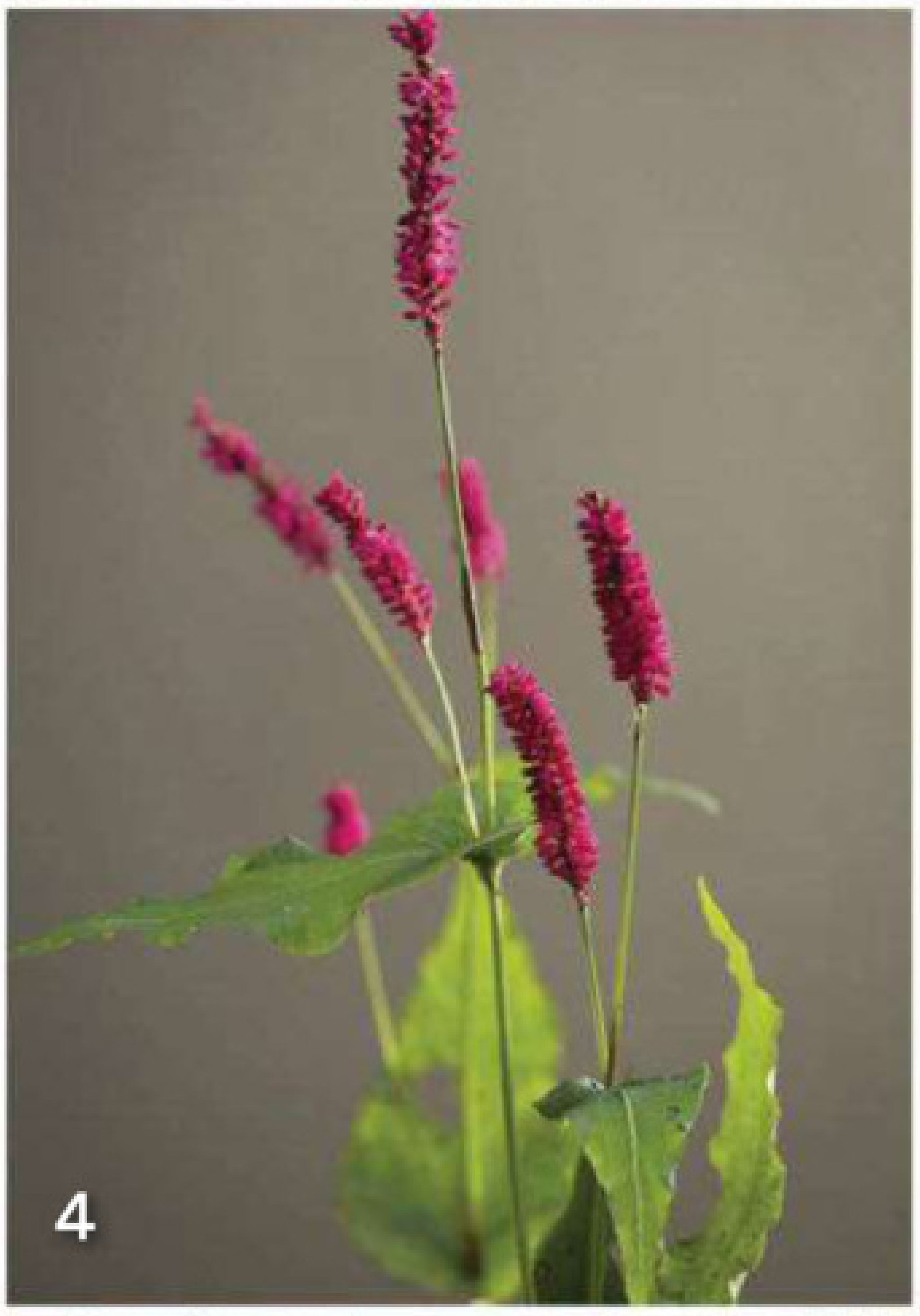
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Nine favourite autumn plants

1 *Eupatorium maculatum* 'Purple Bush' A structural plant that looks good all year.

2 *Pennisetum alopecuroides* 'Hameln' This fountain grass provides thick, brush-like flowers.

3 *Tricyrtis formosana* Beautiful when backlit in late summer, it grows well and is disease free.

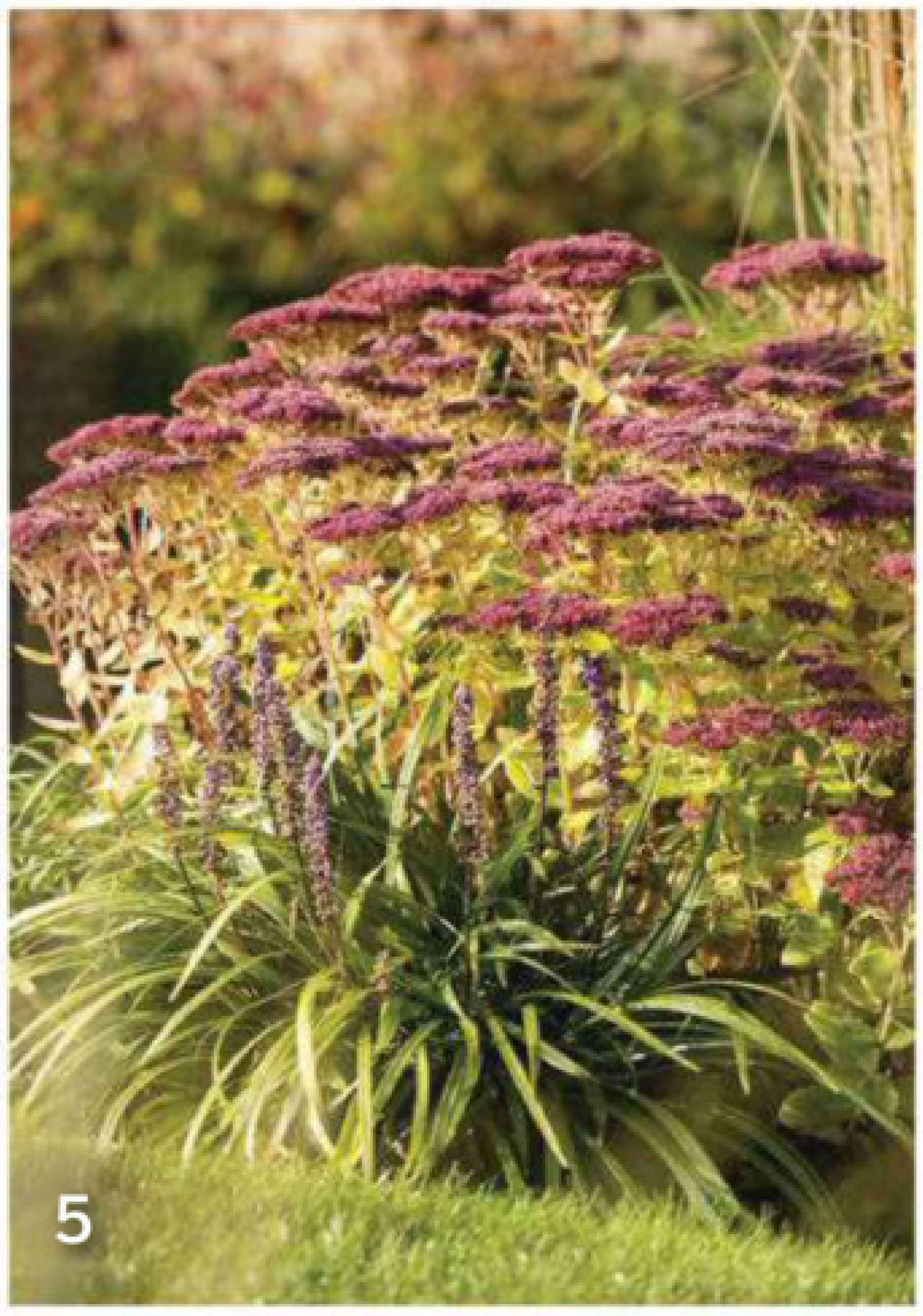
4 *Persicaria amplexicaulis* Taurus (= 'Blotau') Beautiful for covering large areas and as a background for other plants.

5 *Sedum* 'Herbstfreude' Pink-red flowers in autumn turn to flat, brown discs in winter.

6 *Agastache* 'Blue Fortune' Beautiful faded flower stems last all winter. AGM*.

7 *Rudbeckia fulgida* var. *sullivantii* 'Goldsturm' Adds a burst of late colour in September and then little round seedheads.

8 *Monarda* and *Rudbeckia* seedheads Both of these perennials provides interesting black, globular seedheads in winter.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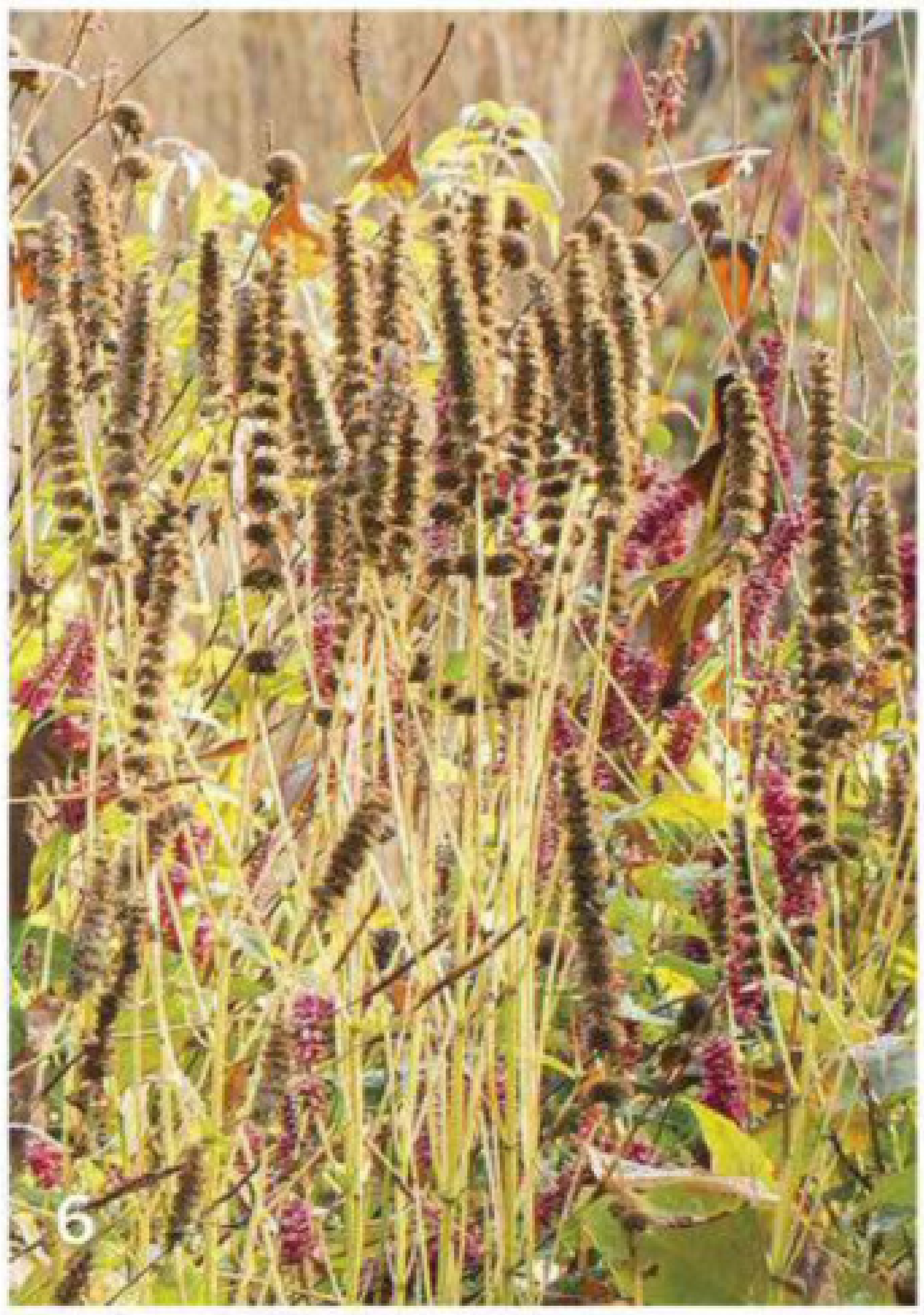
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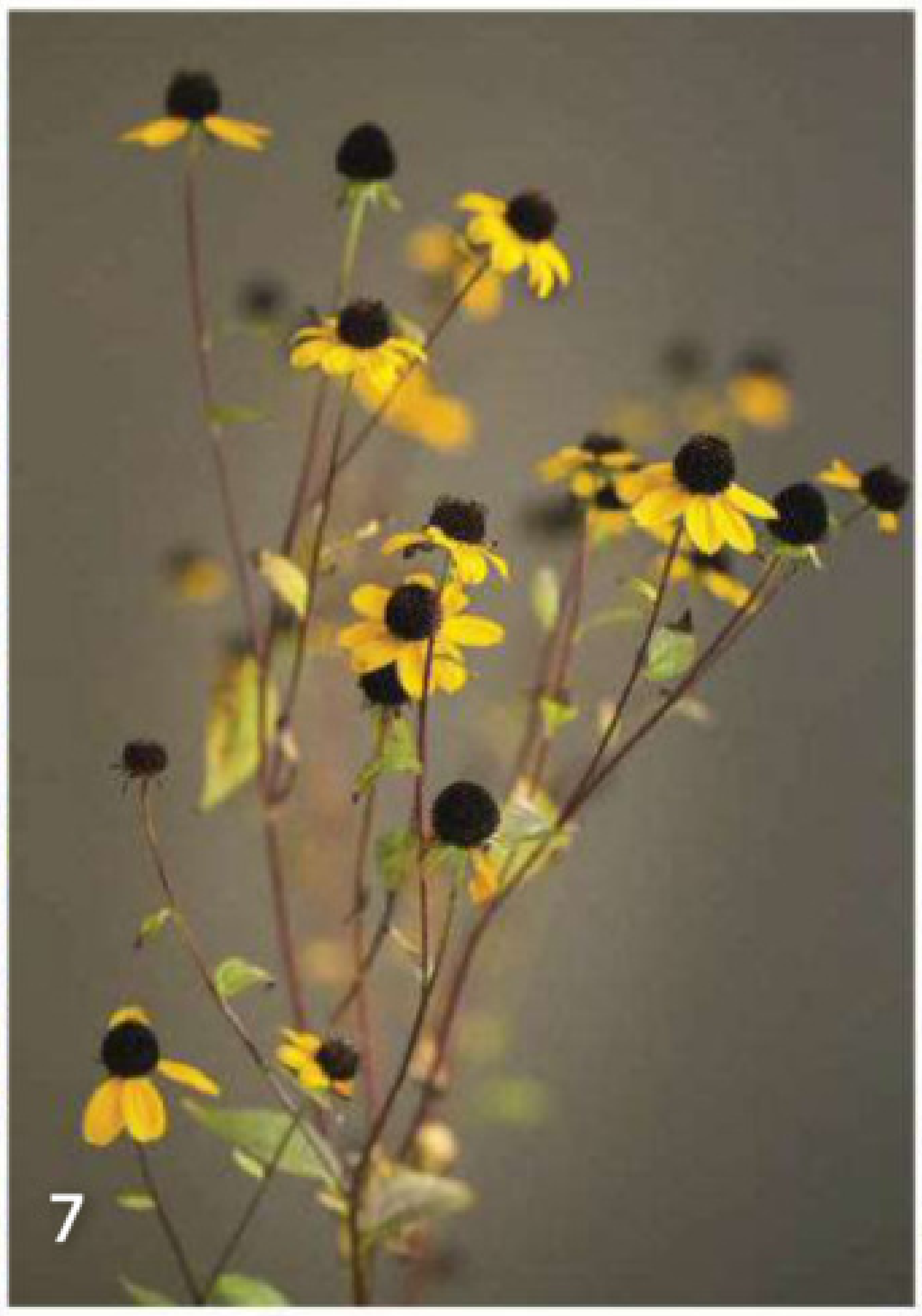
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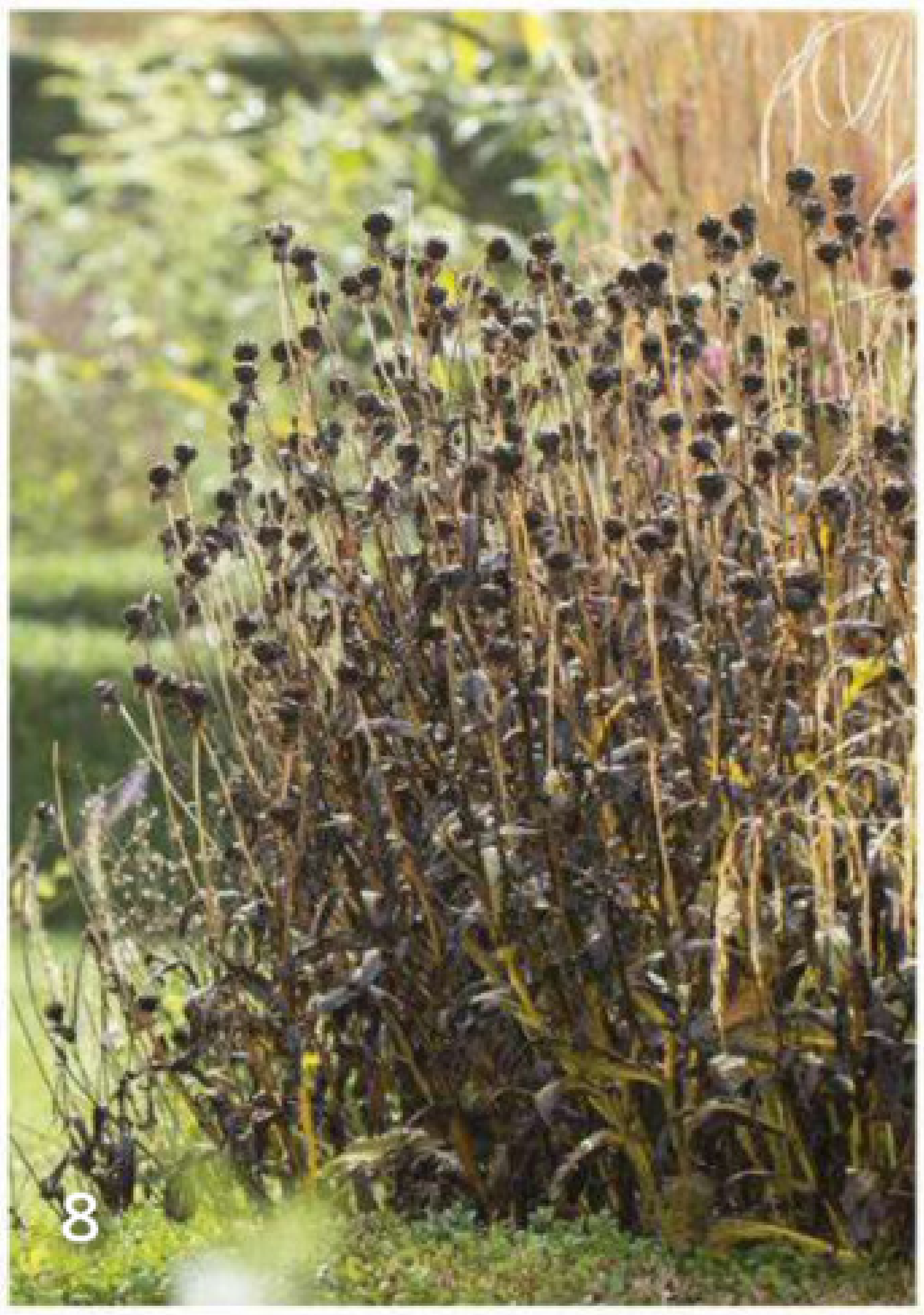
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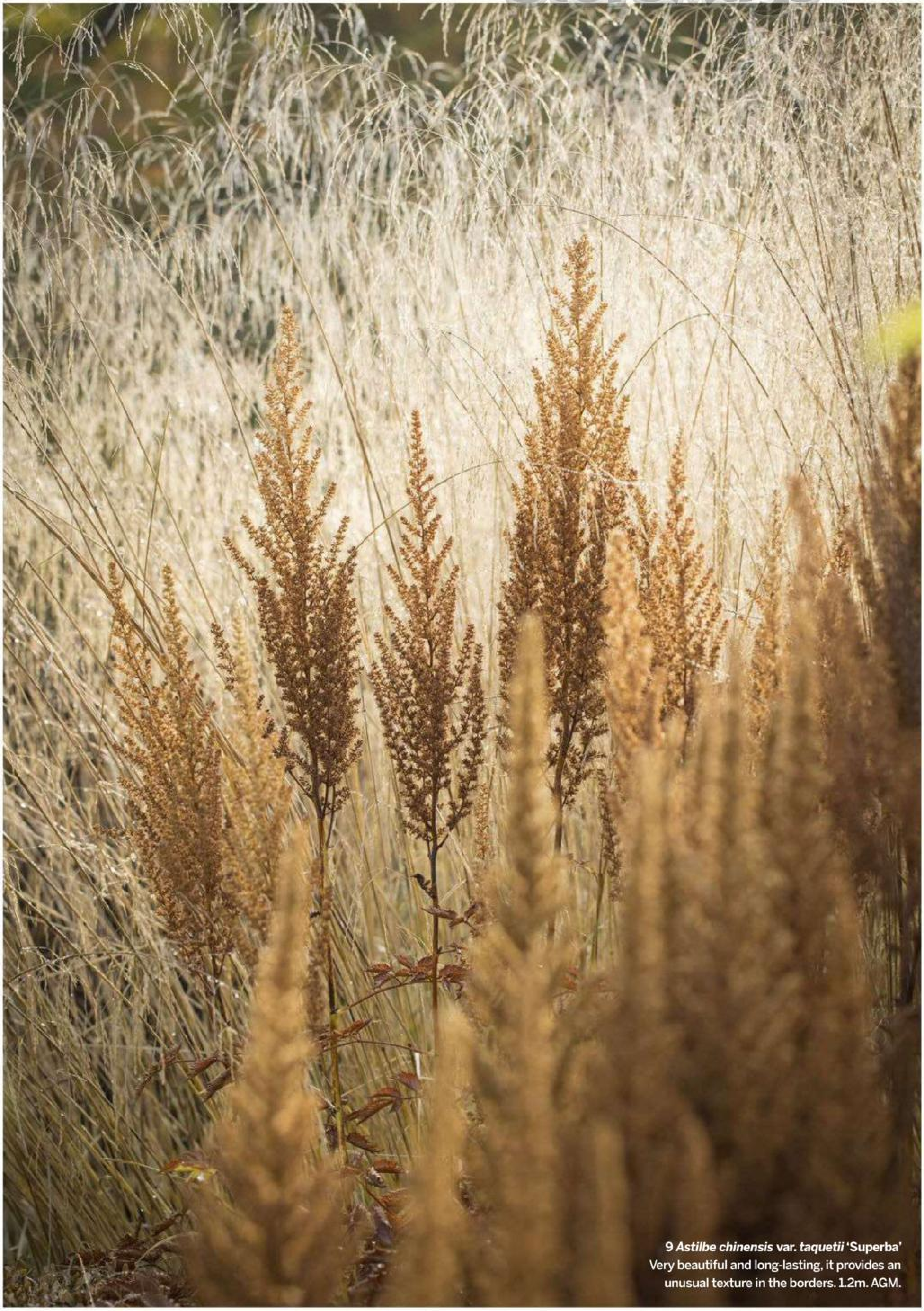


9 *Astilbe chinensis* var. *taquetii* 'Superba'
Very beautiful and long-lasting, it provides an unusual texture in the borders. 1.2m. AGM.

A rake's progress

Operating out of an ancient workshop in the Cumbrian village of Dufton, Rudd's Rakes, now run by the fourth generation of the Rudd family, is the last commercial wooden rake maker in Britain

WORDS **NATASHA GOODFELLOW** PHOTOGRAPHS **ANDREW MONTGOMERY**

These light yet sturdy rakes have found many other uses: for raking garden leaves, grass cuttings, gravel and sand, and even for spreading concrete

Scratched into the smoke-blackened stone above the fire in the centuries-old Cumbrian barn workshop of rake makers John Rudd and his son Graeme are the initials of those who have made rakes there before them. “That JR in a spade shape, that’s my dad,” says John. “And this one [he points to a faintly chiselled J Rudd] was my grandfather, who took over what was then a joiners business in around 1890.”

As was typical then, and until around the 1950s, making hay rakes was a seasonal but important part of a joiner’s wider trade that took in everything from building gates to repairing cartwheels and laying floors. John, now 78, remembers felling birch and ash trees in late summer, seasoning them ready to be made into rakes over the following winter and spring, before the farmers needed them for ‘haytiming’. It was a labour-intensive process with a large, seasonal workforce. “You’d have three or four men doing nothing but hammering teeth in all day,” he says.

As haymaking declined after the war, many rake makers went out of business. But John’s father, also called John, sensed an opportunity. When he took over the firm in 1948, he decided to specialise and modernise, installing electricity and commissioning a handful of unique machines to speed up parts of the process – decisions that have served them well as Rudd’s Rakes is now the last commercial wooden rake maker in the country. Of their output, only a tiny percentage is used for hay. These light yet sturdy rakes have found many other uses: for raking garden leaves, grass cuttings, gravel and sand, and even for spreading concrete.

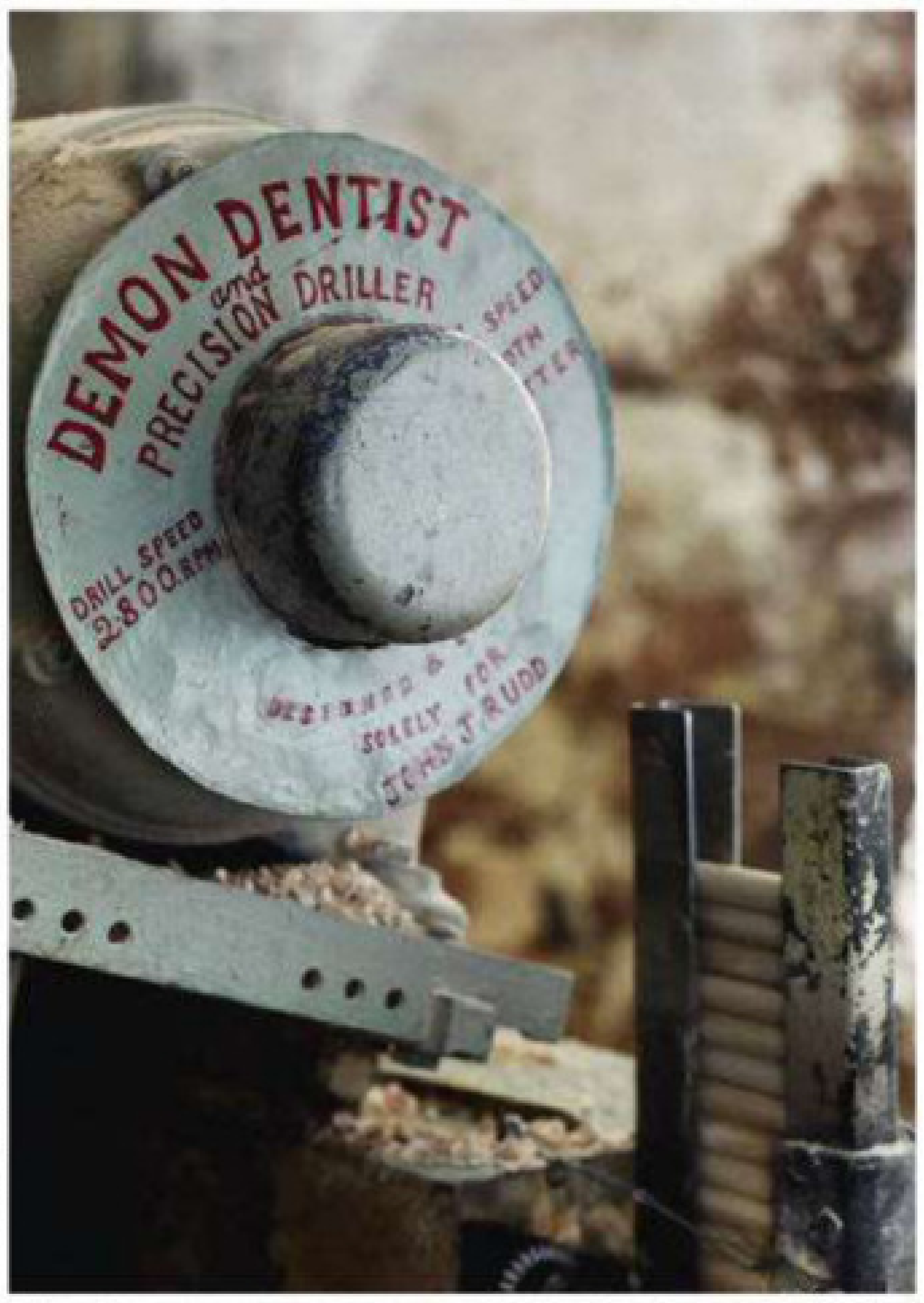
“There is little difference in the look of the rakes to those my grandfather made,” says John, who like Graeme after him, started helping out in the workshop as a child. Ash wood (for the shafts, heads and connecting bows) and hard-wearing birch (for the teeth) are still used, albeit no longer felled by the Rudds themselves. The rounded rods for the bows are still boiled and bent in the same way as they always have been, using primarily only the lower, most flexible part of the trunk. Quality of the wood is all-important. “With the ash, we’re looking to cut good clean boards with a straight grain and no knots,” explains John. A small table saw cuts these into square lengths before they are planed. “We call the machine the head shaver,” says John, as he strokes a piece of wood. “Because this is a head, and now it’s shaved.”

The prepared heads are then taken to the ‘Demon Dentist’, another of John’s father’s specially commissioned machines, which deftly drills holes and punches the birch teeth into them. Holes are drilled for the shaft and the bow, and then the teeth are pointed before the finished head is once again planed and chamfered. “We tend to work in batches,” says John. “Seventy dozen shafts; 70 dozen bows and then 70 dozen heads. Then we put them all together and start again.”

John and Graeme agree that assembling the finished rakes is their favourite part of the process, with John tending to attach the bows, twirling the head on a measure to make sure it’s straight. “It’s most pleasant in winter,” says John. “We have the fire going, there are no machines, no noise.” It sounds idyllic, so why hasn’t he found the time to add his own initials to the wall? “I don’t know why,” he laughs. “I can’t have been bothered. I like my work and I don’t play.” □

USEFUL INFORMATION

The Rudds don’t sell directly to the public, however, their rakes are available from selected retailers, including: **The Natural Gardener** (Tel 01568 611729, thenaturalgardener.co.uk); **Emorsgate Seeds** (Tel 01553 829028, wildseed.co.uk) and **Hen & Hammock** (Tel 01844 217060, henandhammock.co.uk). Prices start at around £28.50 plus postage and packaging, although some companies also offer the option to collect.


DEMON DENTIST
and
PRECISION DRILLER
DRILL SPEED
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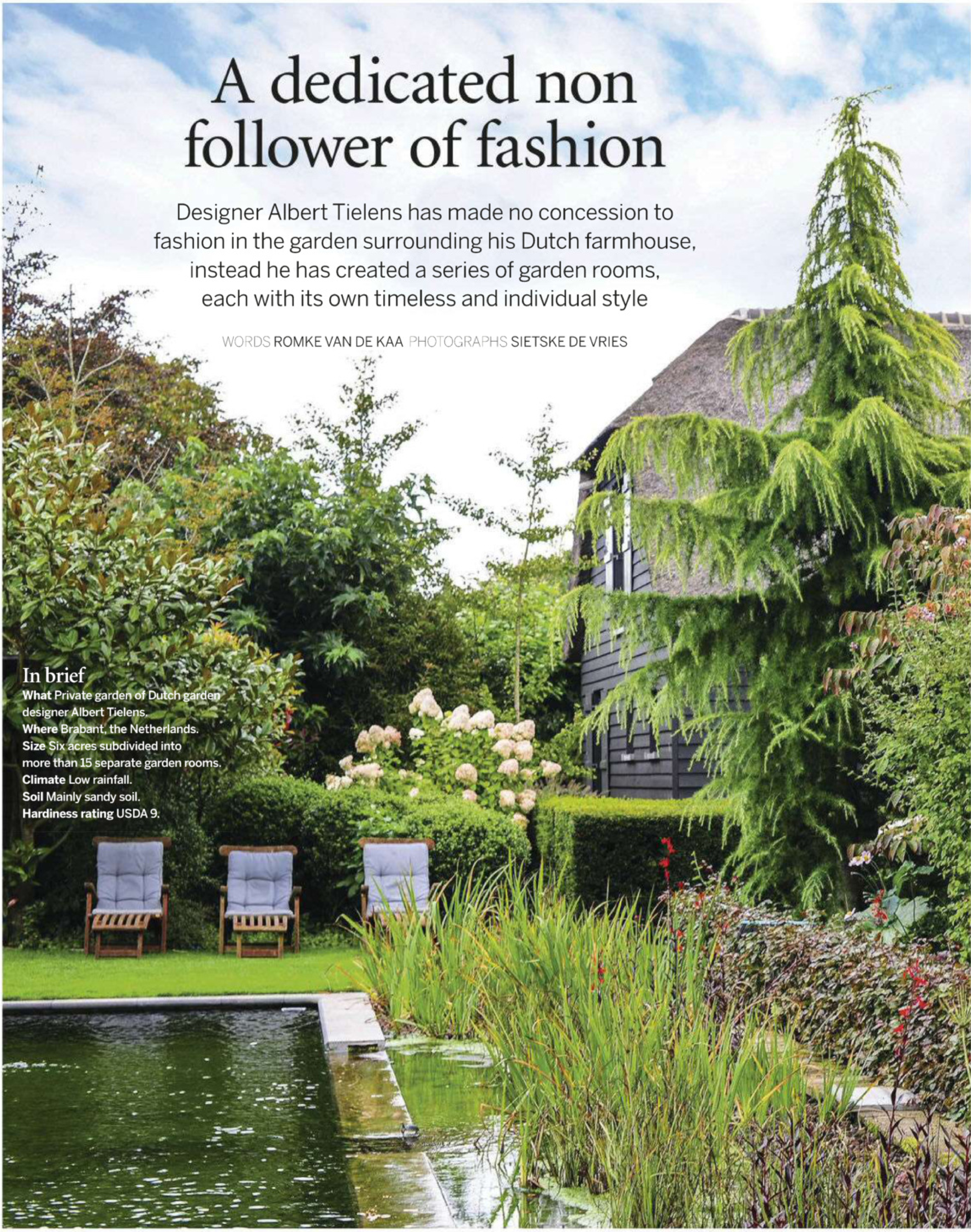
DESIGNED &
SOLELY FOR
JOHNS J RUDD

A dedicated non follower of fashion

Designer Albert Tielens has made no concession to fashion in the garden surrounding his Dutch farmhouse, instead he has created a series of garden rooms, each with its own timeless and individual style

WORDS **ROMKE VAN DE KAA** PHOTOGRAPHS **SIETSKE DE VRIES**



In brief

What Private garden of Dutch garden designer Albert Tielens.
Where Brabant, the Netherlands.
Size Six acres subdivided into more than 15 separate garden rooms.
Climate Low rainfall.
Soil Mainly sandy soil.
Hardiness rating USDA 9.

Albert, who loves to swim every day, built this natural swimming pond after cormorants fouled the water of his original 50m pond. Edged with *Iris sibirica* and the bright-red flowers of *Lobelia cardinalis* 'Elmfeuer', it is sheltered by a tall border dominated by the pink heads of *Eupatorium maculatum* 'Riesenschirm'.

Don't expect to find any fashionable features in the garden of Dutch designer Albert Tielens. There are no drifts of sanguisorbas, eupatoriums and ornamental grasses, nor are there any meadows filled with wildflowers – the only meadows here are grazing for sheep and horses. "I don't care about fashion," says Albert. "Fashions come and go. I care about structure and design. Fashion is ephemeral; design is forever."

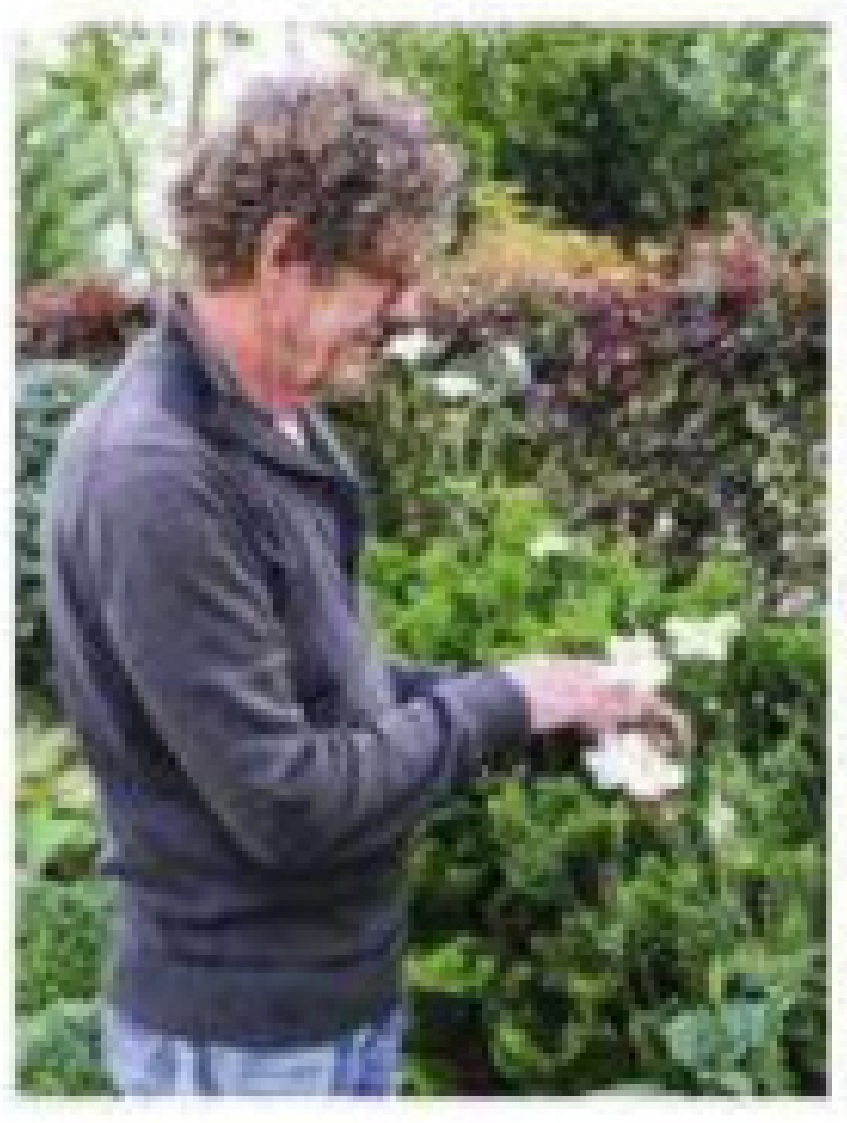
Structure is what Albert's garden is about. Hedges form the background of his borders that surround the numerous ponds and clipped shrubs are everywhere. Not just as solitary specimens, but in groups and also in borders. And, most unfashionably: the garden is full of conifers. And water – there is water everywhere, from ponds and small, rippling water courses to grand canals.

Albert has been designing gardens all his professional life, and still does so now, at the age of 75. He designed his garden, as well as his house – a traditional thatched farmhouse – 20 years ago. Close to the house, the design of the garden is inspired by that of a typical Dutch farm garden: subdivided by low hedges, and full of flowers; *Verbena bonariensis* has sown itself everywhere. And, of course, there is a walnut tree. Traditionally, every Dutch farm garden had a walnut tree. It was planted near the dung heap, to ward off lightning and evil spirits, and, more practically, its ▷

1 More than half of the plants in the border overlooking the original swimming pond are trees and shrubs, many of which Albert has owned for years. "I grafted a lot of them myself when I was at horticultural college," he says.

2 Near Albert's thatched house, an old brick well sits beneath a *Platanus x hispanica* and clipped *Osmanthus x burkwoodii*.

3 In early autumn the borders are still full of colour, with late-flowering perennials, such as eupatoriums and sedum, given structure by a hedge of red beech. "I love brown- and red-leaved plants," says Albert.



Designing with plants

Tips from Albert Tielens on putting plants at the centre of your design

Good design begins with a solid backbone of hedges, trees and shrubs. At least half should be evergreen, but beech and, on moist soils, hornbeam can work just as well – and, when bought as whips, they are a lot cheaper.

But remember that evergreen shrubs are important to build a good garden frame that stays erect in winter. Evergreens keep the garden interesting during the dreary months. They also provide birds with a place to sleep in on cold nights.

Don't restrict your planting palette to simply perennials and grasses. Use bulbs for early spring colour, perennials and annuals for summer and autumn, and climbing plants and conifers too. And don't forget ferns. Ferns have a unique shape and add interest to any garden. The genus *Polystichum* is important as there are a lot of them and none are ugly. Some, such as *Polystichum aculeatum*, are practically evergreen.

Be ruthless. If a plant is no longer working in a certain position, throw it out. And always try to choose the best cultivar of a plant.

1

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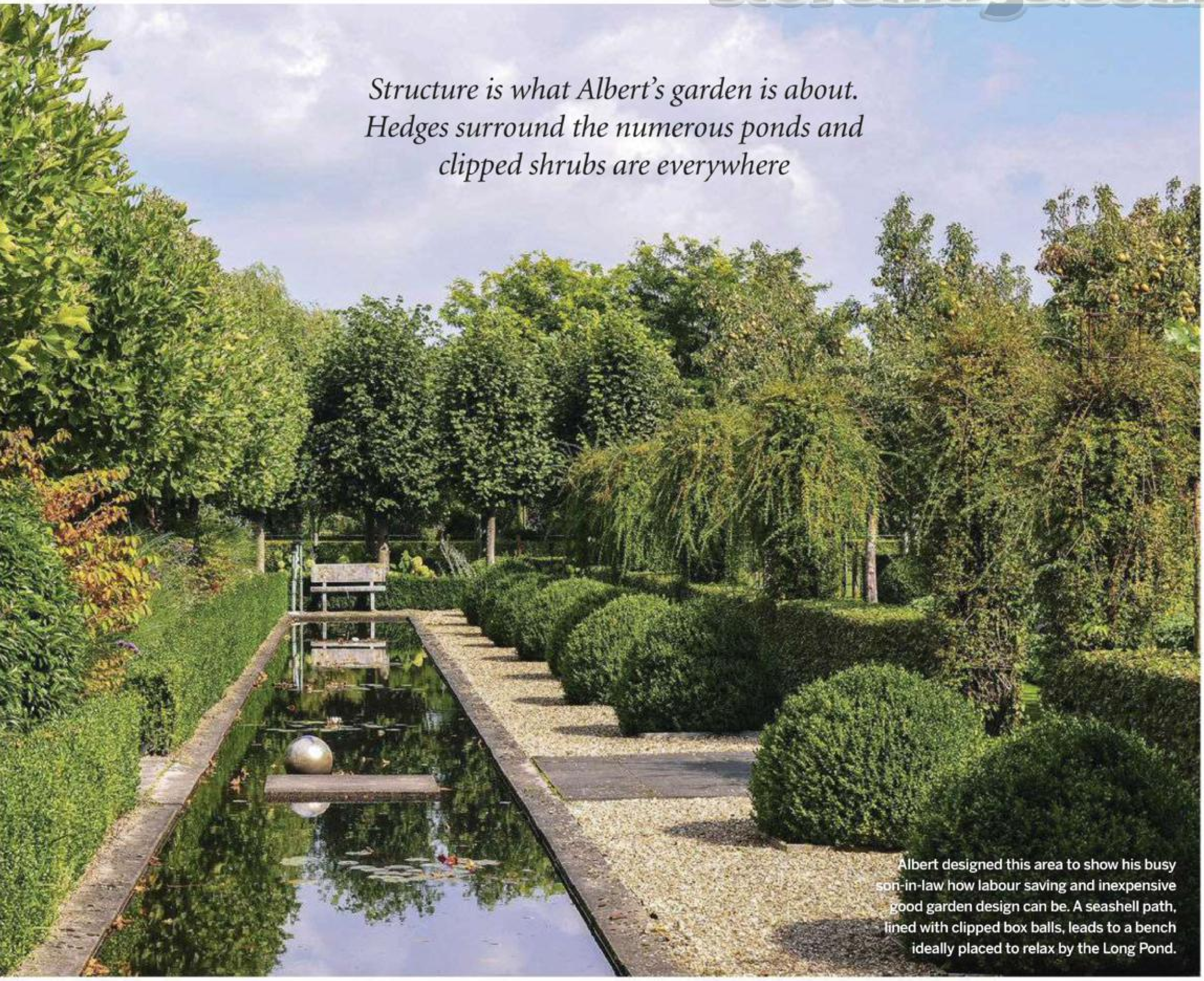


Structure is what Albert's garden is about. Hedges surround the numerous ponds and clipped shrubs are everywhere

Albert designed this area to show his busy son-in-law how labour saving and inexpensive good garden design can be. A seashell path, lined with clipped box balls, leads to a bench ideally placed to relax by the Long Pond.

2

3

▷ scent keeps mosquitoes away. This garden is backed by a row of *Picea glauca* var. *albertiana* 'Conica' that have been with Albert for more than 50 years. "I would never use them in a design for others," he says. "They either get spider mite or they revert, but I grew these from cuttings and could not be without them."

From here, passing through an arch of *Fagus sylvatica* var. *heterophylla* 'Aspleniifolia' you reach one of the garden's many water features. "Water is life," says Albert emphatically. "I love swimming, but I hate swimming pools. So I made a swimming pond of Olympic dimensions, with a marsh to filter the water and a pump to circulate it. I swam in it for years, every day, and in no time the pond was full of life, newts, frogs and fish appeared out of nowhere. Now it's just a pond."

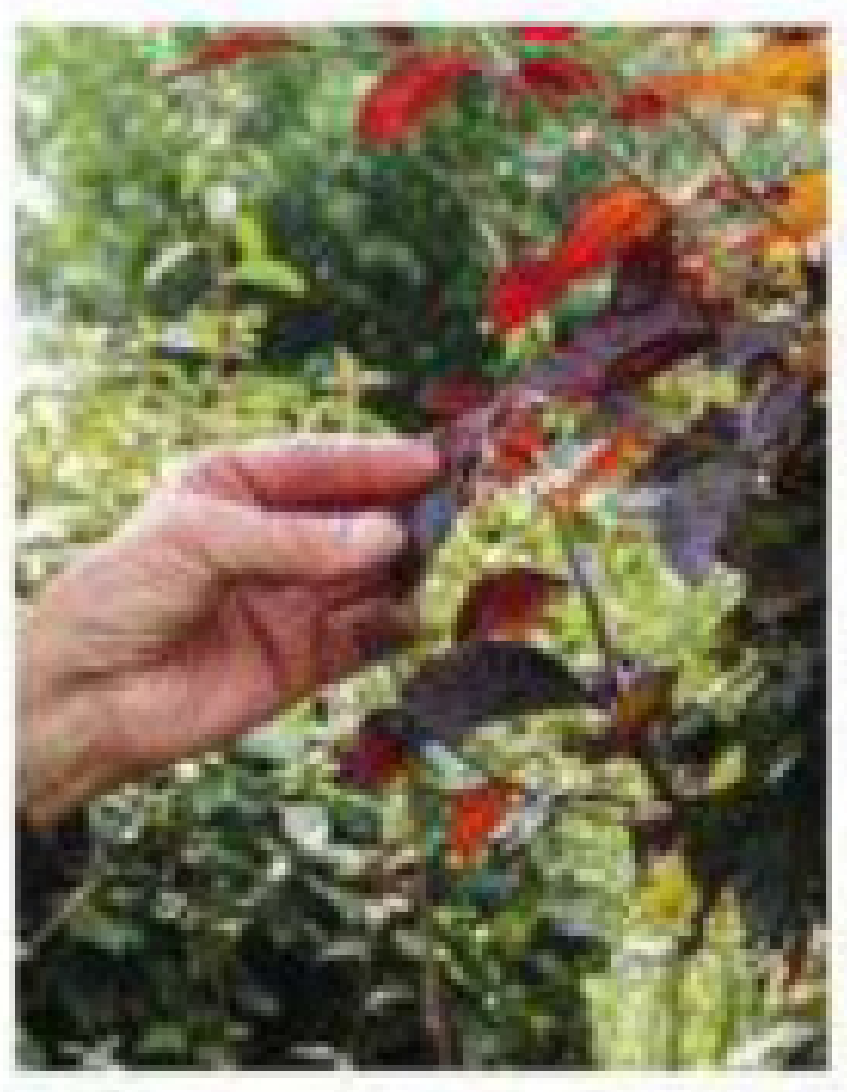
On both sides of this pond are mixed borders, including many deciduous shrubs and conifers, such as *Cercis canadensis* 'Forest Pansy' and *Choisya* x *dewitteana* 'Aztec Pearl', clipped into shape, and small specimens of *Cephalotaxus harringtonia* 'Fastigiata', looking like an upright, broad-leaved yew. In autumn the garden is still colourful with late-flowering perennials, such as sedums, vernonias and Japanese anemones.

Beyond the pond, backed by a mulberry, is the beginning of a meandering canal, which is flanked by narrow borders of ▷

1 Colourful dahlias, including the burgundy 'Chat Noir', fill beds in the Kitchen Garden, which backs on to a meadow that is home to Princess the shire horse.

2 The hedge behind this intimate seating area has been purposefully lowered to reveal a view of the fields beyond. Combined with the quirky chandelier, it creates the impression of a formal drawing room.

3 Albert enjoys clipping hedges – although he admits he doesn't like clearing away the hedge clippings – and has created several topiary areas, such as this grouping of box balls.



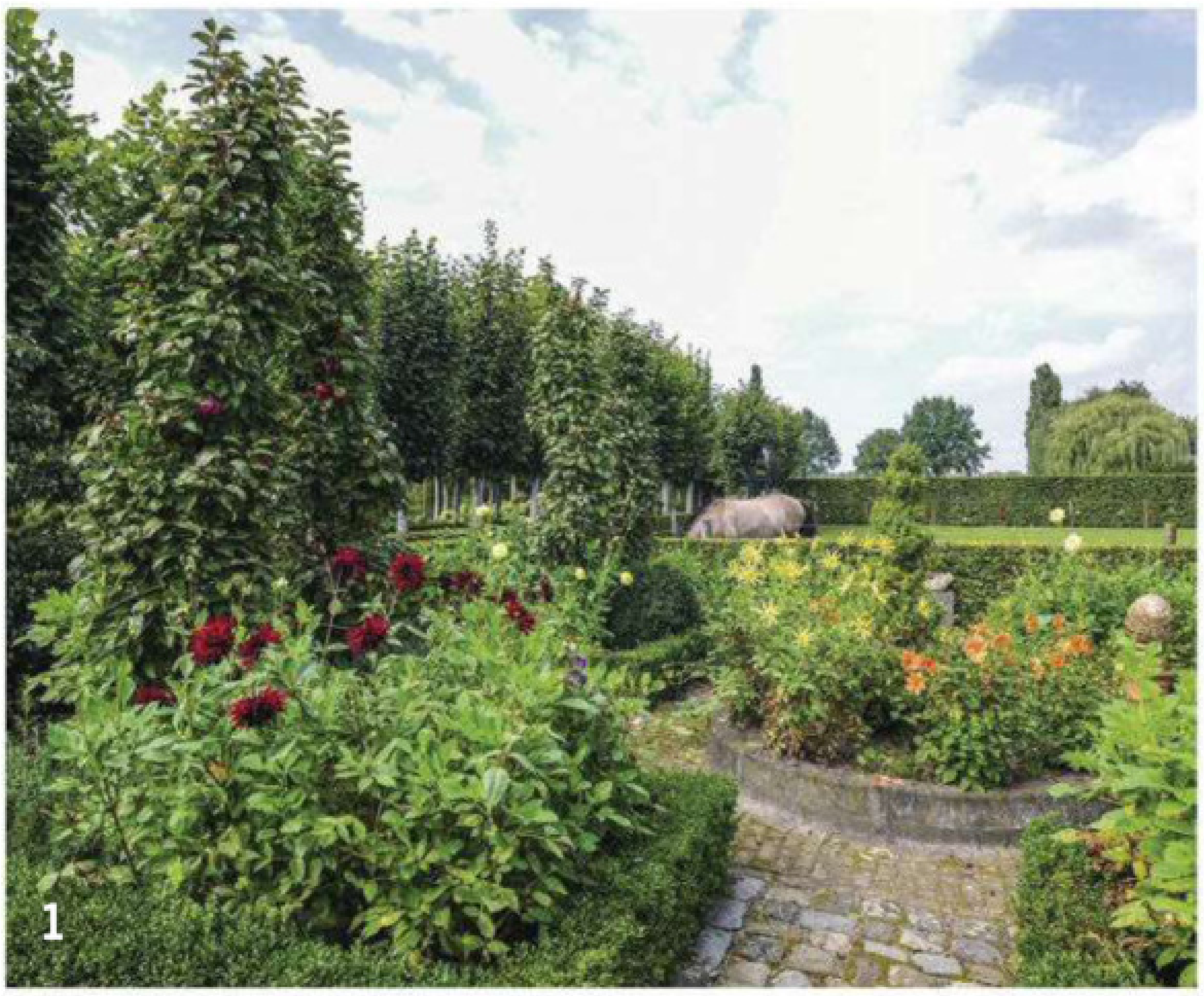
Tips for planting hedges

Remember to leave space around any hedges you plant so you can reach to cut them. If the hedge is large – and you have sufficient space – you might want to consider leaving room for a service path so you can use a wheelbarrow or small tractor to remove the clippings. But if you opt for the latter, be careful with thorny hedging plants. Albert finds it is impossible to avoid getting a flat tyre when removing hawthorn clippings.

If you don't want to spend time clipping and shaping, opt for plants that have an interesting shape without being shorn. Dwarf conifers, such as *Picea glauca* var. *albertiana* 'Conica' and *Chamaecyparis obtusa* 'Nana Gracilis', make such an interesting shape that clipping them would be a crime.

Since box blight became a problem, Albert has been looking for good alternatives. He uses *Lonicera nitida*, especially the cultivar 'Maigrün', for small hedges and *Osmanthus* x *burkwoodii* for larger hedges and topiary, but still uses the box cultivar *Buxus sinica* var. *insularis* 'Tide Hill', which he has found to be healthier than most.

Don't forget that hedges need feeding, just like any other plant, so apply an organic fertiliser in winter.



Albert has been designing gardens all his professional life, and still does so now, at the age of 75

Near Albert's traditional thatched farmhouse, the garden has been laid out in the fashion of a typical Dutch farm garden with low hedge surrounding flower beds. Here *Verbena bonariensis* has self-sown itself everywhere.

2

3

▷ *Alchemilla mollis*, *Geranium* Rozanne (='Gerwat') and *Salvia nemorosa* 'Caradonna' but these common perennials are punctuated with the rare *Hydrangea aspera* Hot Chocolate (='Hpopr012') with velvety liver-coloured leaves. Other shrubs, clipped into shape, are *Buxus sinica* var. *insularis* 'Tide Hill' and *Choisya* x *dewitteana* White Dazzler (='Londaz').

In total the garden – which at more than six acres is large, by Dutch standards – is subdivided into more than 15 separate gardens. Some are simply left to their natural beauty. At the far end of the gardens is a copse full of nettles and golden hop to please the butterflies, a meadow for chickens and swings for Albert's grandchildren. "I design gardens as a profession," says Albert, "but this is my own garden; it's not meant to be an example for others. I work in my garden every day, it makes me feel good and it helps me to concentrate. I simply love gardening." ◻

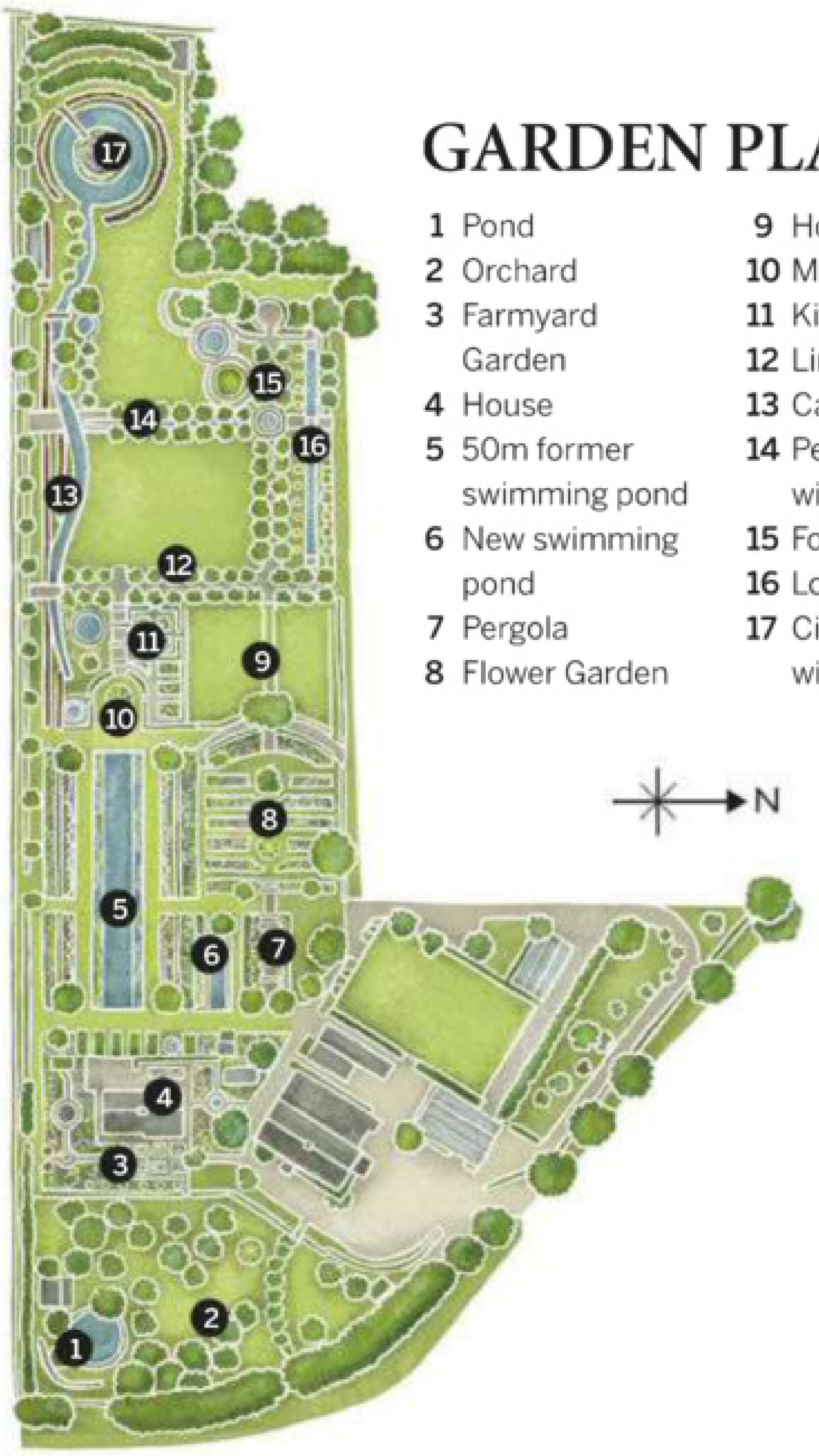
USEFUL INFORMATION

Address Bovenstraat 63 4741 TP Hoeven, the Netherlands.
Tel +31 (0)165 502829.
Website tielensentielens.nl
Open By appointment, from May to September.

1 A small pergola covered with *Wisteria sinensis* forms a focal point at the centre of conifers near the Flower Garden. The tall pair of *Thuja occidentalis* behind were raised by Albert.

2 In the topiary garden behind the house are clipped balls of *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana* 'Glauca', *Osmanthus* x *burkwoodii* and *Thujopsis dolabrata* 'Nana'.

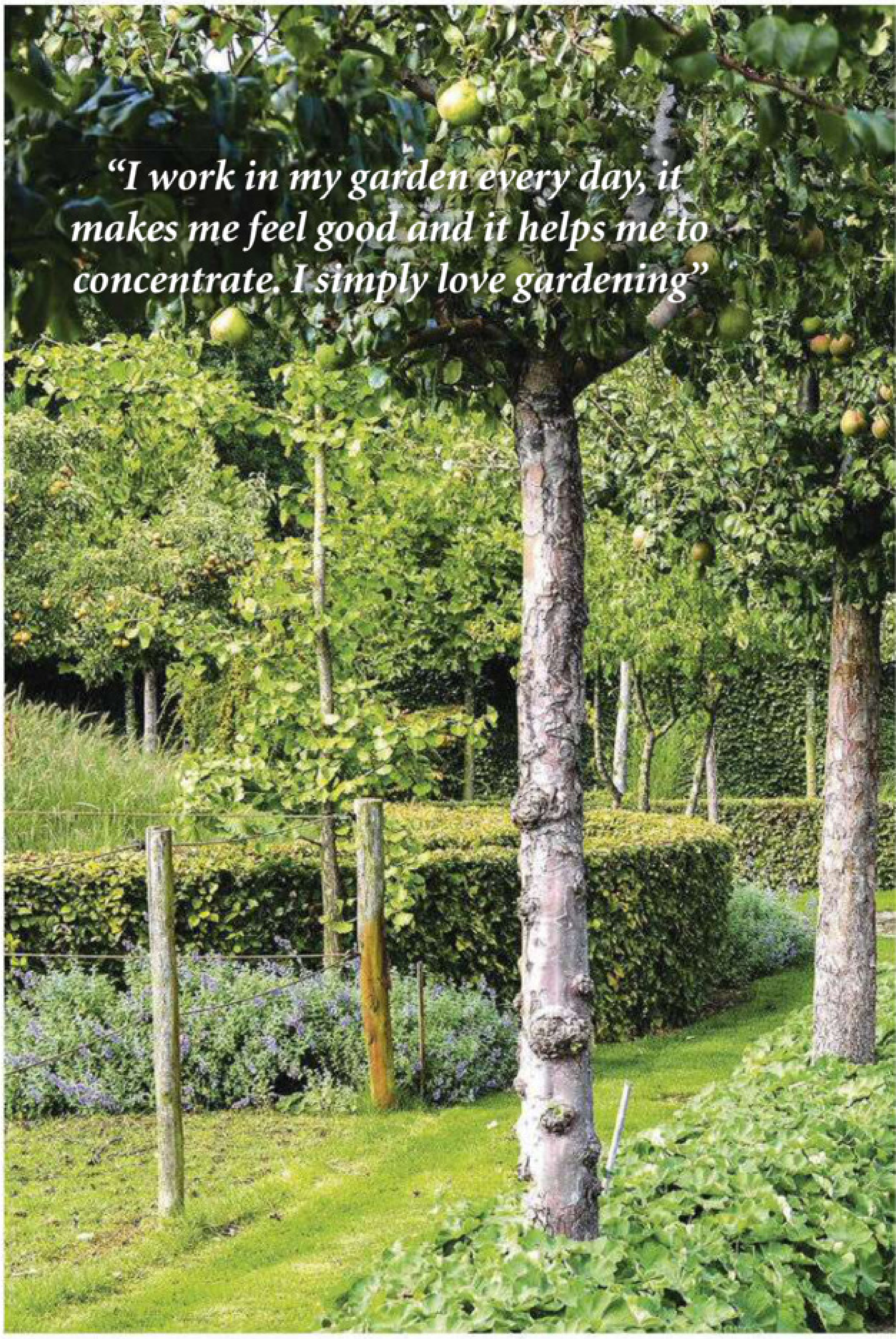
3 The long, meandering canal ends in a circular pond. At its centre is an earth mound known in Dutch as a *vliedberg*, which farmers traditionally built before the introduction of dykes as high ground to escape flood waters.



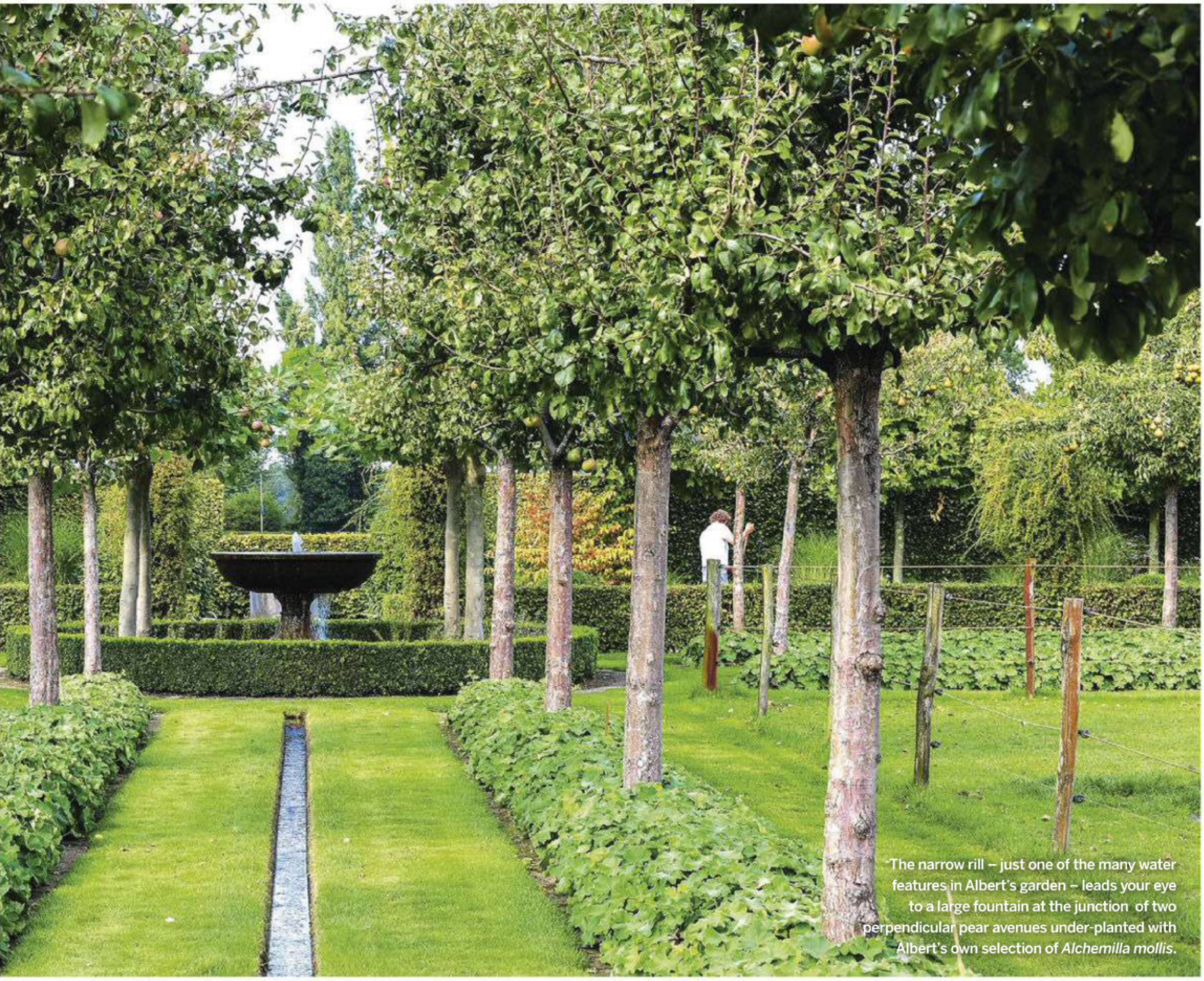
GARDEN PLAN

1 Pond
2 Orchard
3 Farmyard Garden
4 House
5 50m former swimming pond
6 New swimming pond
7 Pergola
8 Flower Garden
9 Horse pasture
10 Mulberry tree
11 Kitchen Garden
12 Lime avenue
13 Canal
14 Pear avenue with water rill
15 Fountain
16 Long pond
17 Circular pond with *vliedberg*

HANNAH McVCAR



"I work in my garden every day, it makes me feel good and it helps me to concentrate. I simply love gardening"



The narrow rill – just one of the many water features in Albert's garden – leads your eye to a large fountain at the junction of two perpendicular pear avenues under-planted with Albert's own selection of *Alchemilla mollis*.

2

3

How to age your garden

Left to nature, a garden can take many years to reach maturity and feel fully established. But there are ways of hastening the process

WORDS **KRISTY RAMAGE**

In a truly ancient garden, paths and steps have been worn down by pounding feet; tree trunks have grown into walls and fence lines; hedges have broadened, hanging out over boundaries, dipping and rolling, eccentric shapes evolved out of years of clipping. Plants grow where seed has survived, tight against walls, out of reach of boot and broom, colonising banks and verges, the less-tended backs of borders and under shrubs. Sun and rain have played their part in creating the patinas that soften and meld the hard surfaces together, encouraging lichens and moss on wind-shaped limbs of trees. For some this looks like garden work undone; to others it is rare and magical. If you fall into the latter camp, it's fair game to mimic some of these effects of time. After all, every bit of gardening is in some way a manipulation. And if you prefer your edges soft, achieving such an effect can be as simple as predicting the journey of wind-born seed and planting to imitate self-seeding from the start.

Historic gardens, such as Sissinghurst, are fantastic study grounds for the use of hard landscaping materials and the effect that time has had on them. Take inspiration from wonderful details, such as this unusual bench in the tower.

MARIANNE MAJERUS/MMGI

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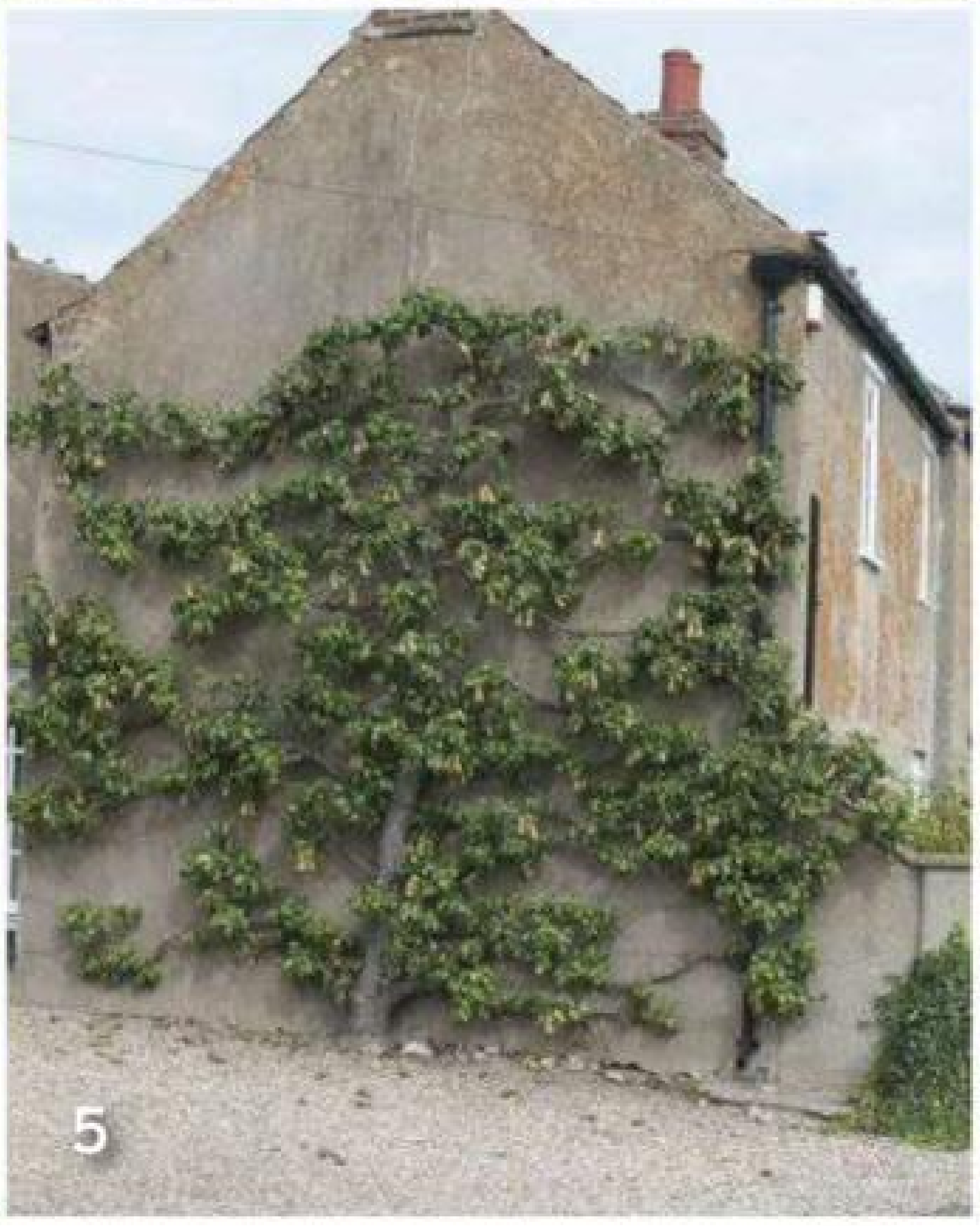
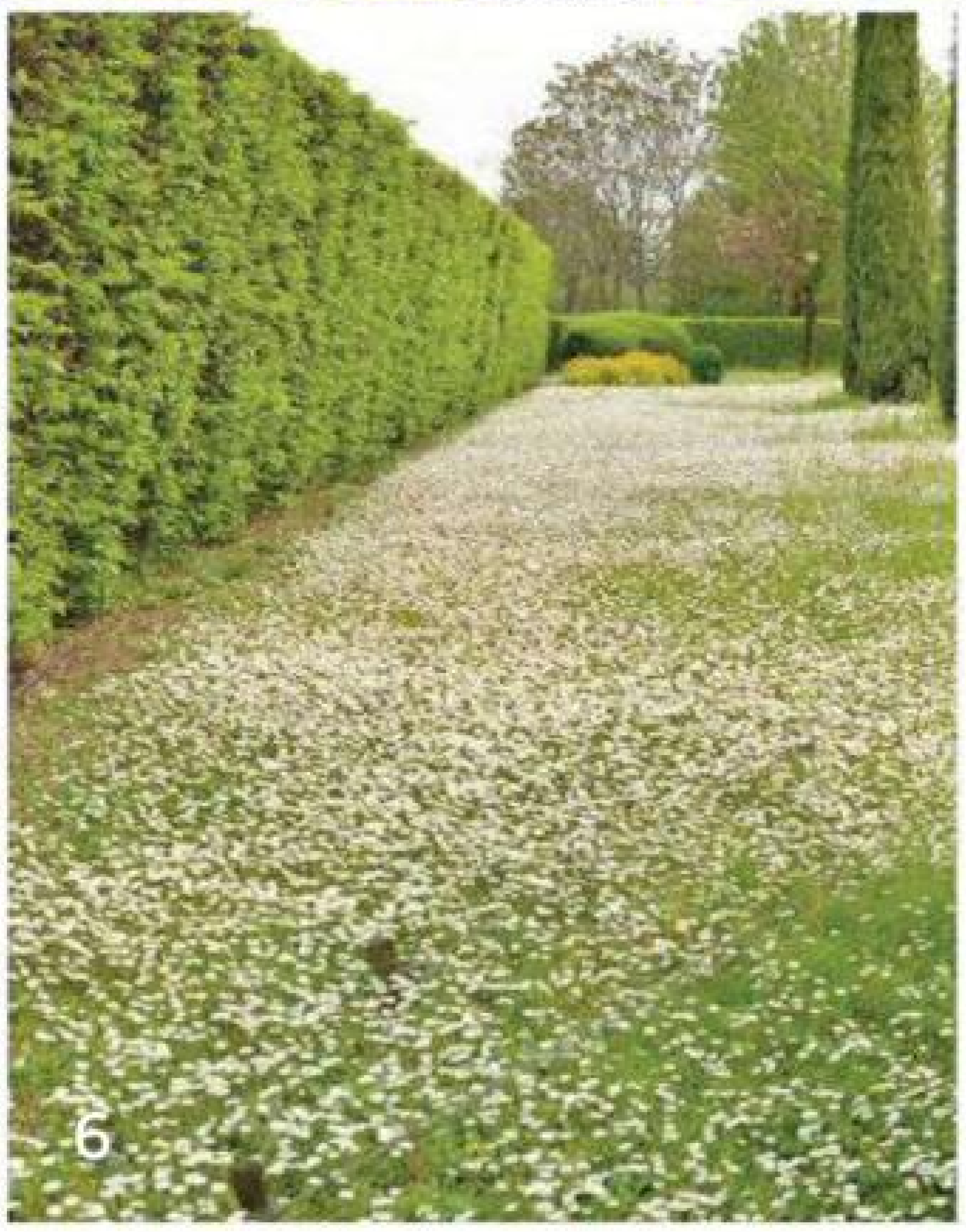
Planting to evoke a sense of age

Some plants emanate a sense of age. Think of yew, the plant of ancient churchyards and manor house hedges, or hawthorn, whose blossom heralds the cusp of summer. There are hundreds more species with widely known, deeply felt cultural associations that somehow emit something of their rich history. Rather than ornamental trees, consider fruit, which was used far more widely in gardens in the past, not just in orchards, but as divisions and avenues, and for clothing the walls of buildings. An espalier pear on the gable end of a house has the quality of a fine antique, but can only be achieved with time, (unless your budget stretches to buying an antique one, which is perfectly possible). If you train it on a hazel structure, however, the frame itself can be a thing of beauty and will give the impression of thicker branches and maturity. Use the natural curves of the hazel, or choose the straightest rods, depending on the look you prefer.

When planting hedges and topiary afresh, imagine the effects of time, and place them so they deliberately cross part of a path, or hang over a wall, or cause a pinch point through which you have to squeeze. Beneath them you can add subtle layers of under planting – violets and cyclamen, snowdrops, lily of the valley, sweet woodruff or wild strawberry – lacing the skirts of clipped forms. Look closely at how bulbs and self-seeding plants spread and imitate the clumping and drifting, mingling one group of plants with another and placing satellites in paths and paving beyond the borders.





1 JASON INGRAM; 2,3 BRITT WILLOUGHBY DYER; 4 MARIANNE MAJERUS/MMGI; 5 NAOMI SHILLINGER; 6 DOMENICO CICCHETTI/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

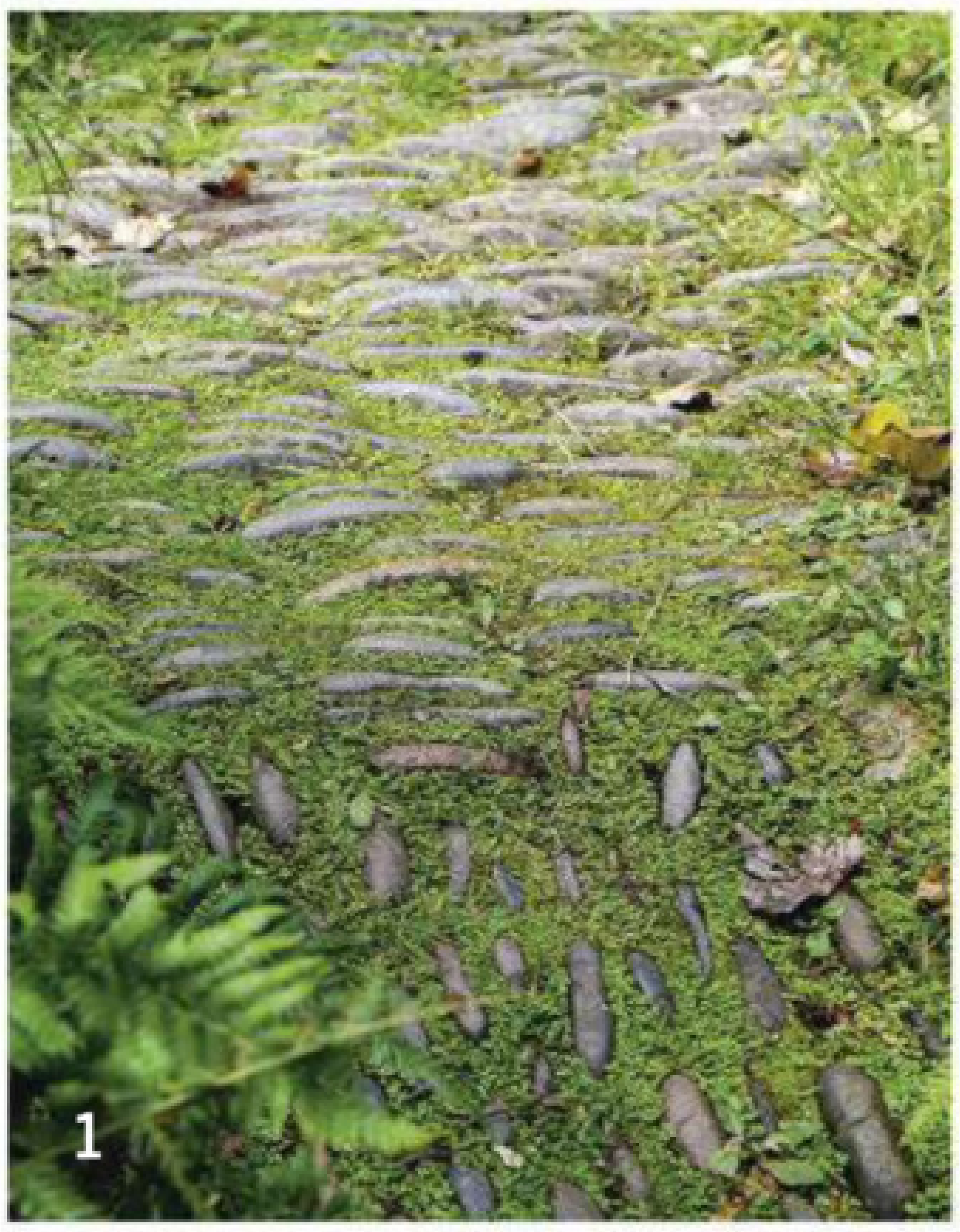
1 Plant snowdrops en masse to give the impression that they have been seeding out for years. Continue to divide and replant them to achieve a thick carpet. **2 Choose bulbs** that will continue to naturalise in grass, such as the wonderfully old-fashioned pheasant's eye narcissus (*Narcissus poeticus*), reputedly first brought to England during the Crusades of the 11th century. **3 The clipping of hedges and topiary** conveys a sense of long-term intervention. Elements such as these, which show the horticultural skill of the gardener, will suggest a mature garden. **4 Sweet cicely *(Myrrhis odorata)*** was an essential plant in a medieval herb garden and is still often found near the doors of old houses. It has beautiful foliage and flowers and every part of it is edible. **5 The lyrical character of this conference pear** on the gable end of a house in Norfolk suits the house, where a more rigid espalier may have felt too grand. **6 Daisies (*Bellis perennis*), celebrated by Chaucer** in the 14th century and treasured by children for making daisy chains, grew freely in the lawns of the gardens of old. Plant them as plugs if you need to encourage them. Why did we ever weed them out?

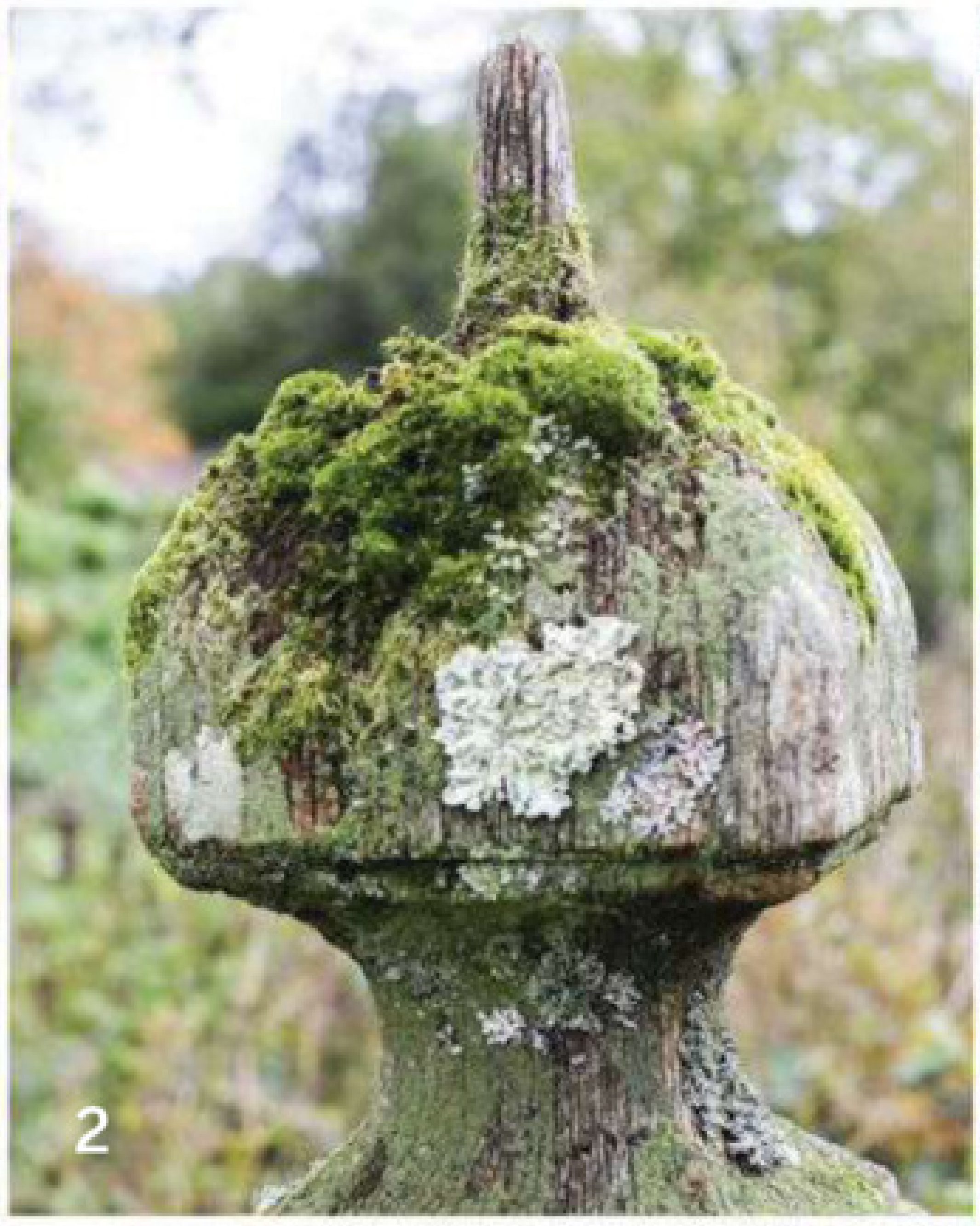
Hard landscaping

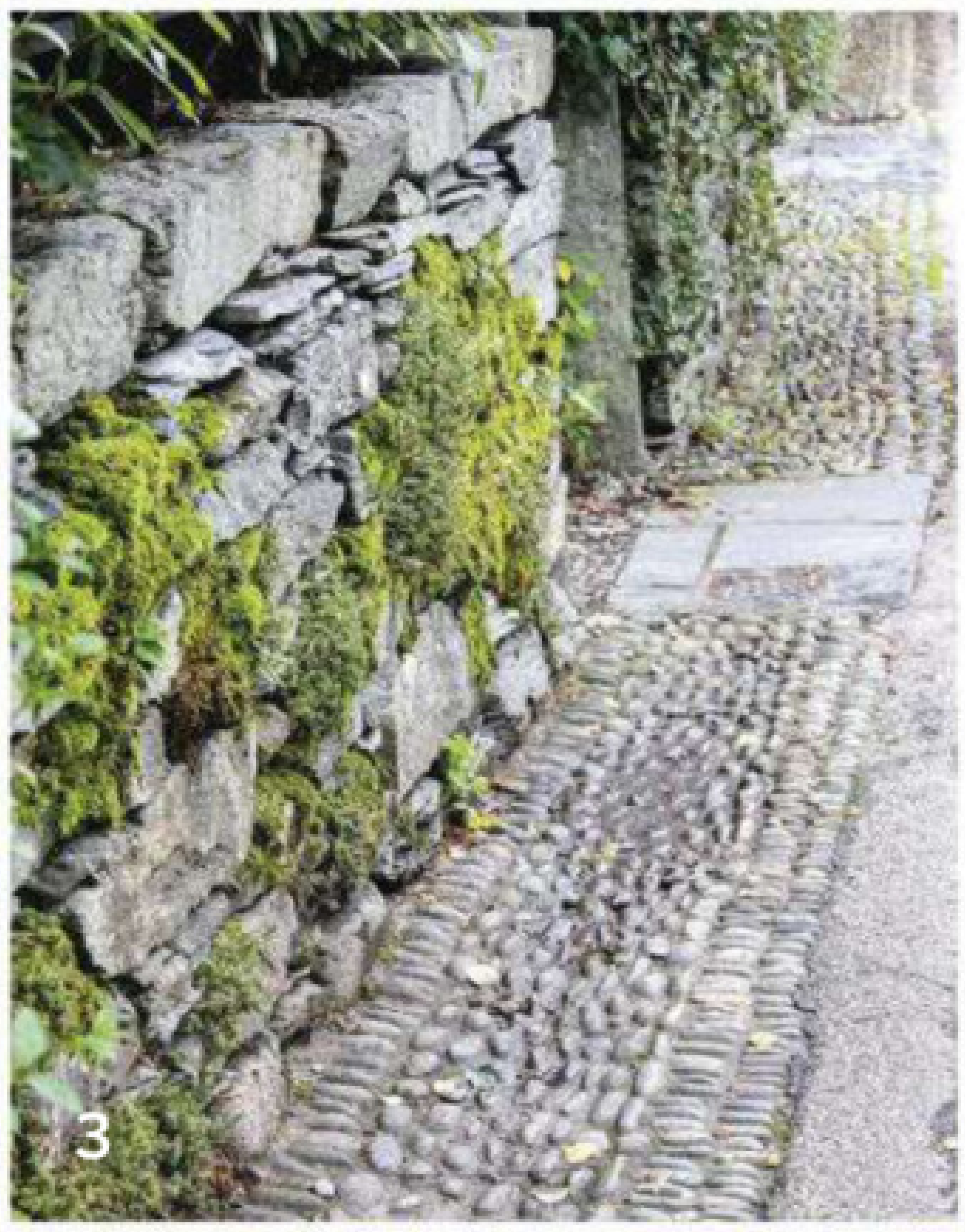
With a newly laid surface or wall (or with one that you have inherited), seeding or planting within the joints (or even chipping out pockets to plant 'establishers' such as ferns), will give the impression of age. If you're building paths, terraces and walls afresh, you have the chance to choose materials that have a sense of belonging and that will naturally age well. Choose stone from a local quarry for flags and walling and use it crushed to chippings and dust for paths. It will not only be the colour of the vernacular architecture, but should tone in with the soil itself.

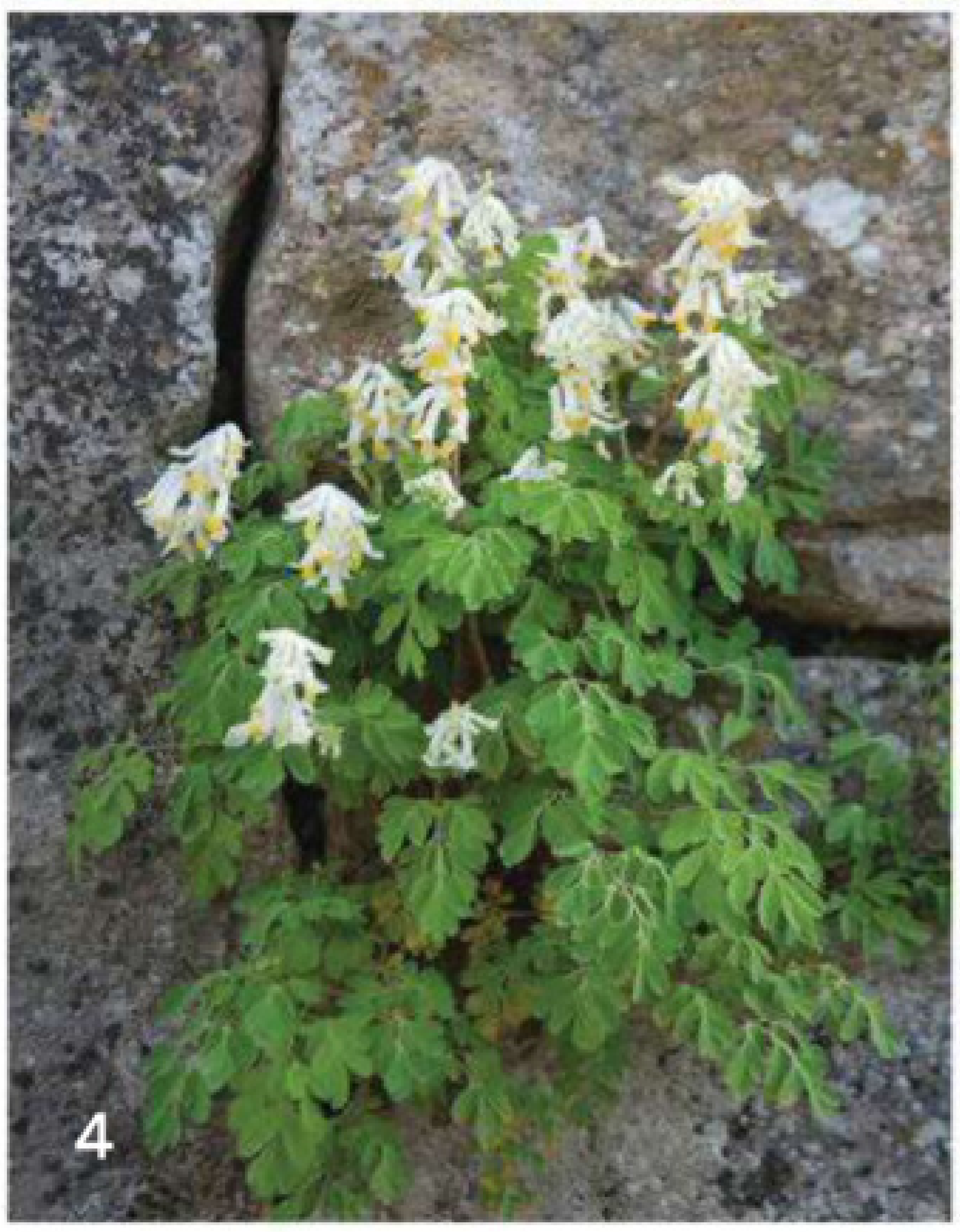
You can still buy handmade bricks that can be made to match original ones, or seek out old ones in reclamation yards, (being wary of soft walling bricks that will laminate in the frost if laid as a horizontal surface). Split stone or smooth, round, riverbed cobbles age quickly and, like a dry stone wall, will show the character of the craftsman who lays them.

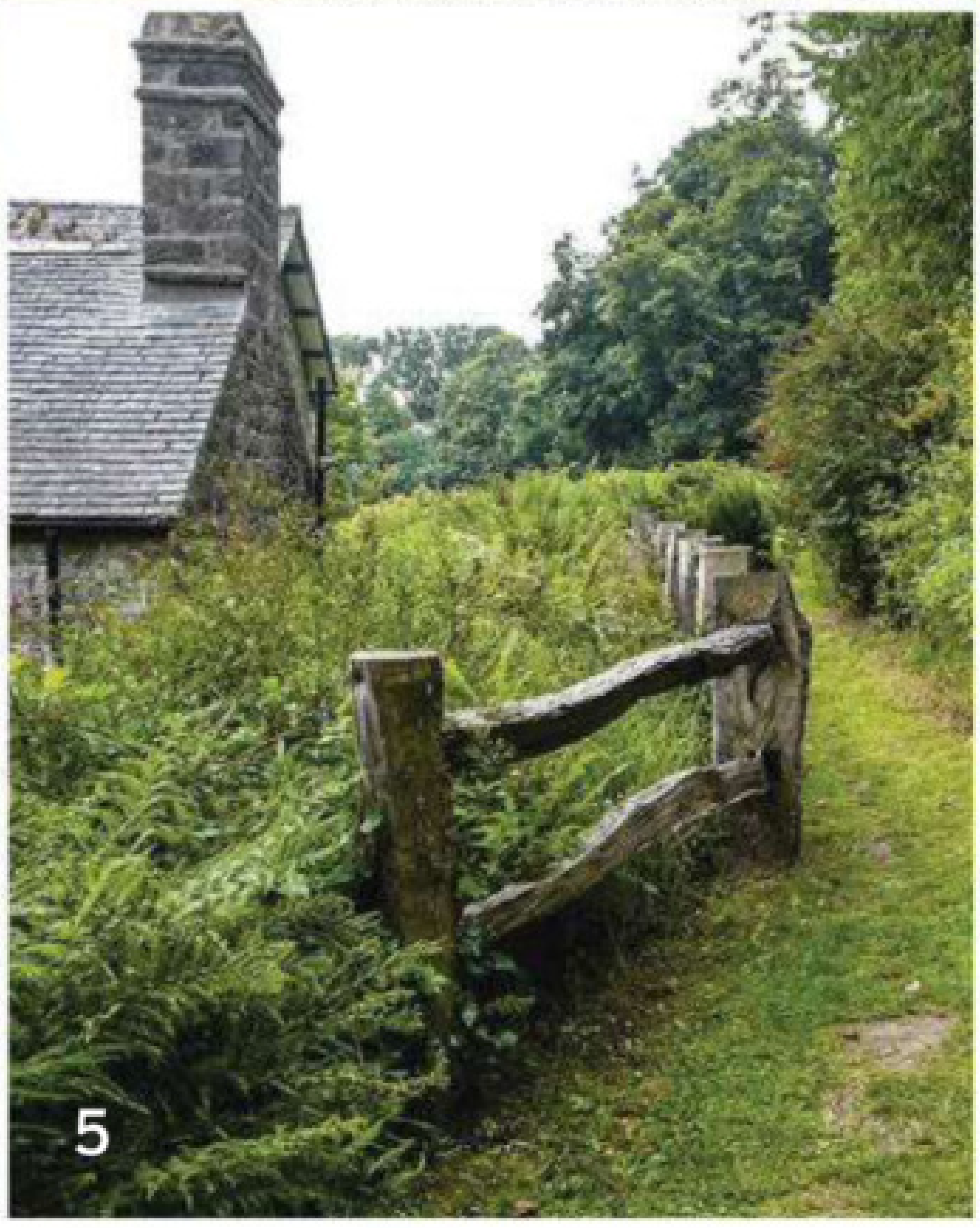
In general, keep the joints between flag stones as tight as possible, bedding and pointing them with lime, not cement. If you don't need pointed joints (to keep the surface 'clean'), simply brush in and tap down a mixture of fine chippings and stone dust or gritty sand. Into these joints you can sow seed of thyme, *Alchemilla mollis*, or lavender; plants that will naturally self-seed in these conditions over time. Surfaces don't always have to be completely flat. Cobbles, for instance, can undulate. You can even consider indenting paths slightly to give the impression of the weight of wear over the years.

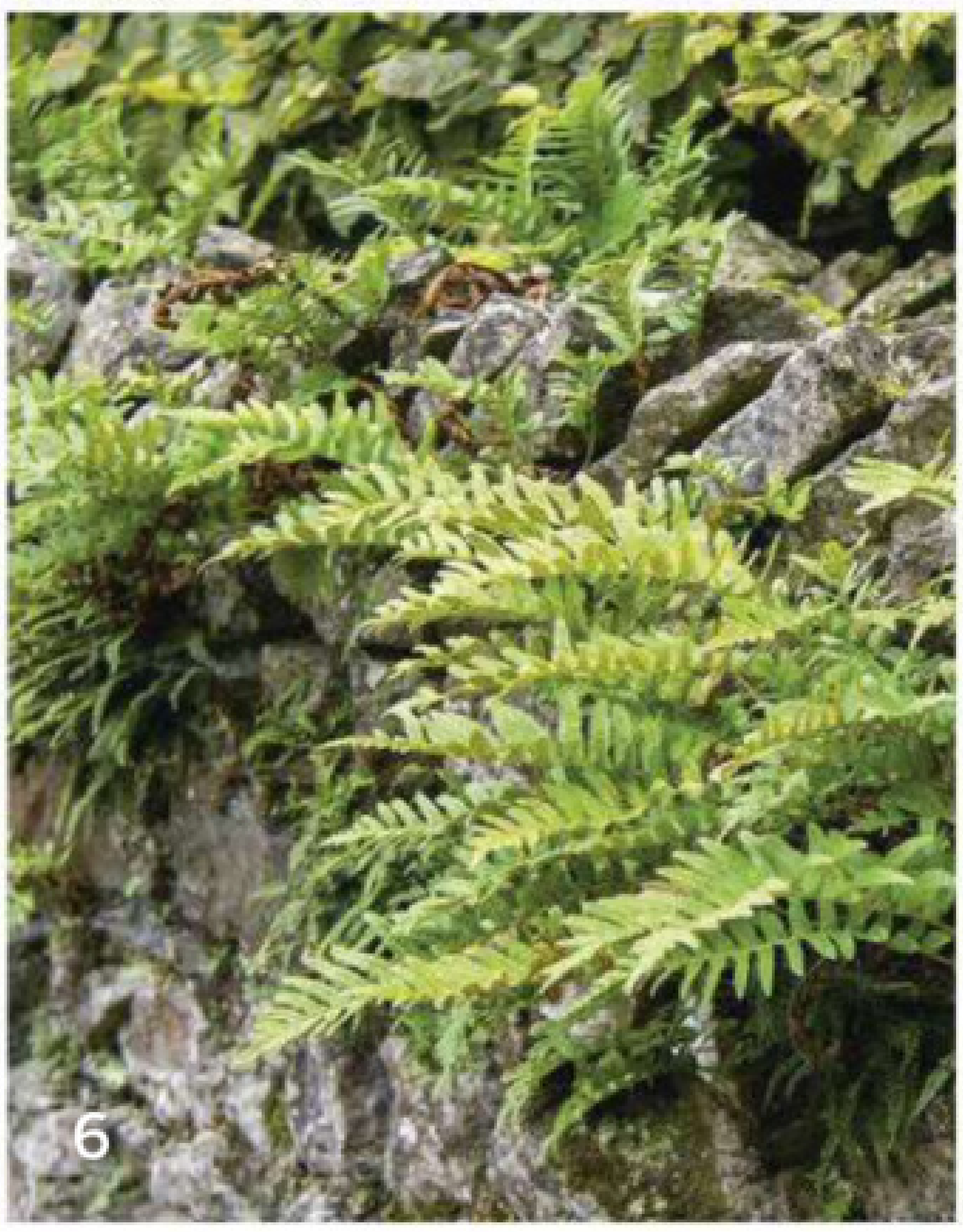






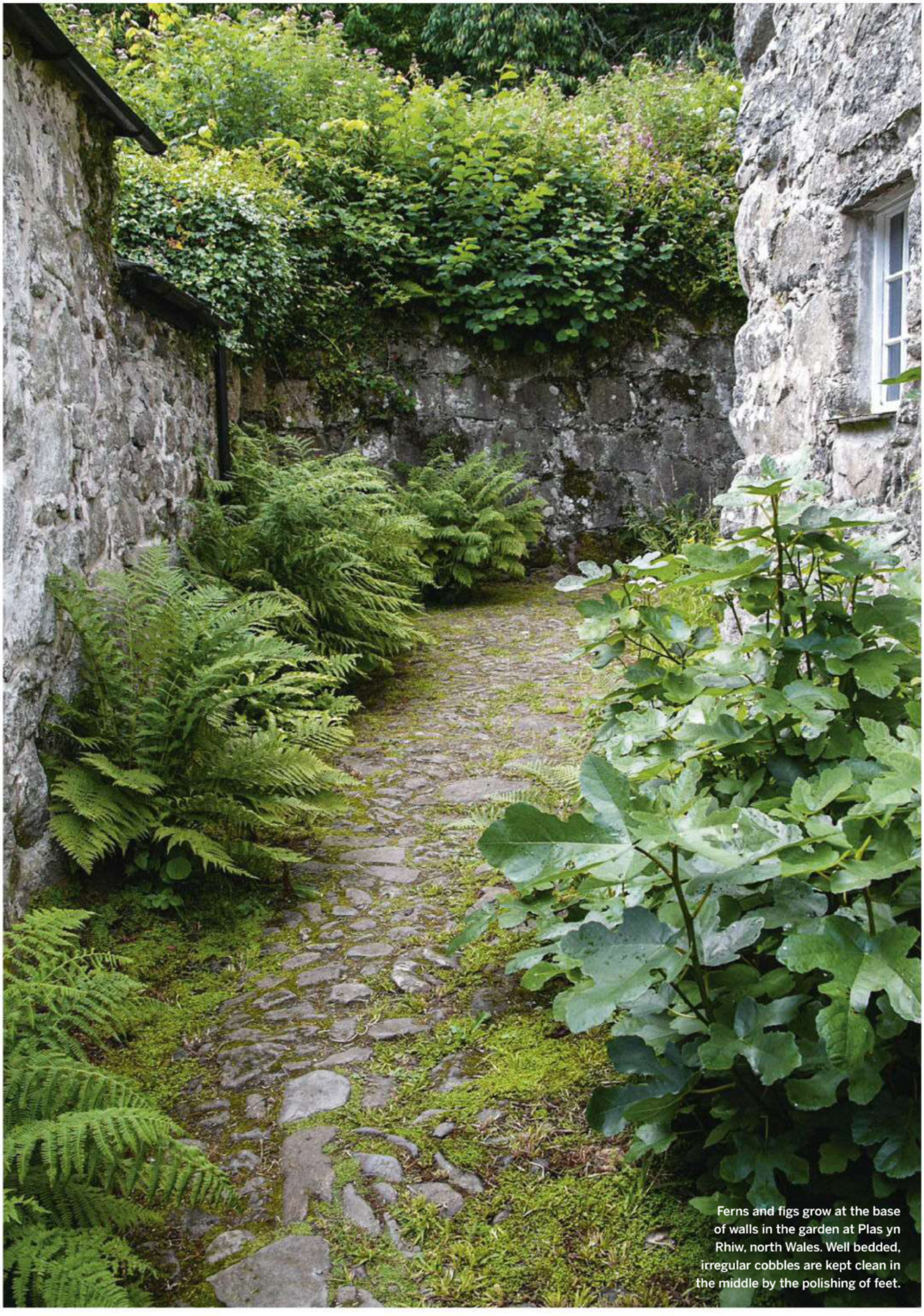






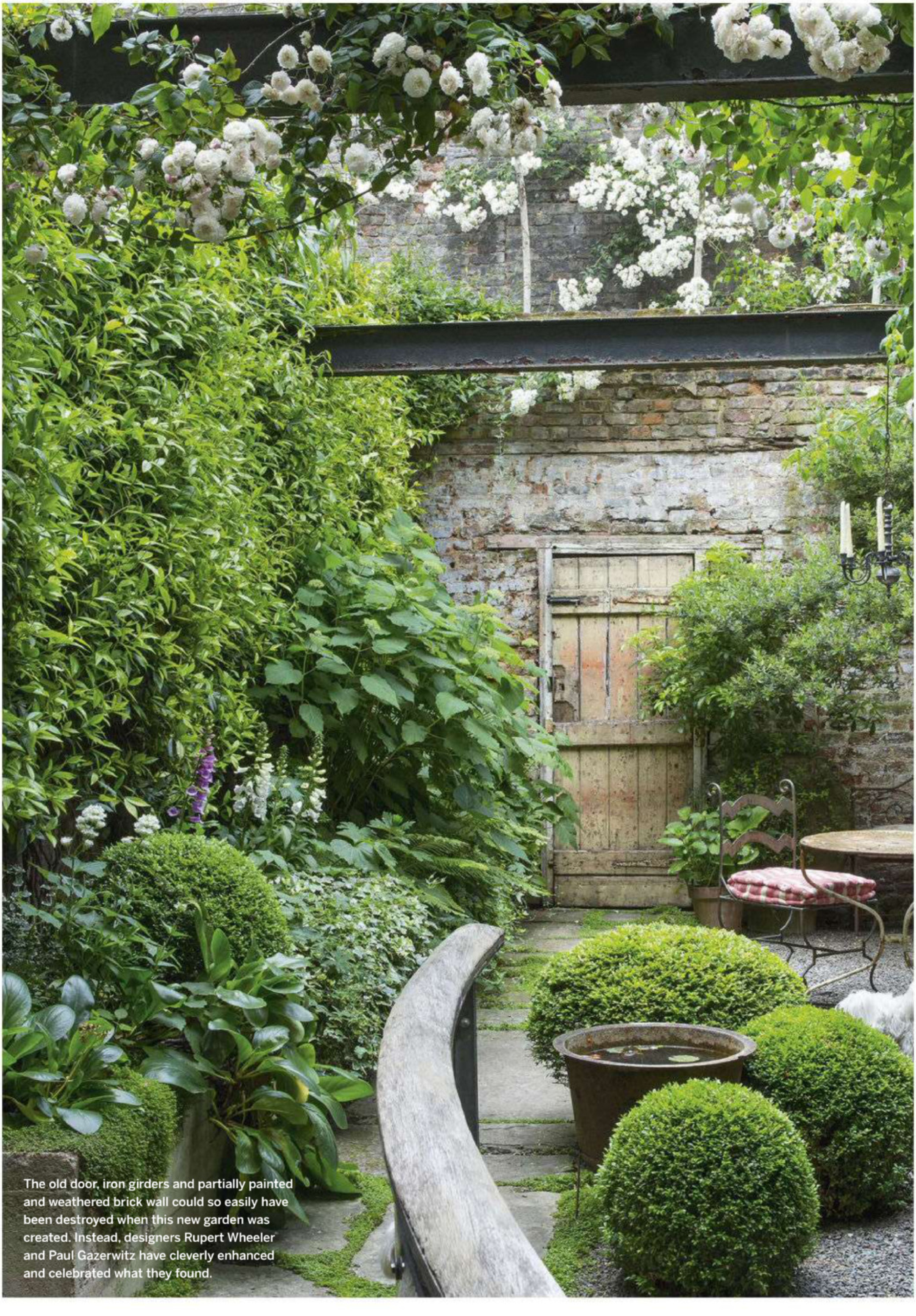
1,3,5,6 KRISTY RAMAGE; 2 CHRIS BLAN; 4 ADRIAN DAVIES / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

1 These smooth, river-washed cobbles look as though they've been embedded in *Soleirolia soleirolii*, creating the softest looking hard surfacing, but beware of it spreading into grass. **2 Gate posts set the tone** of a garden from the entrance. Carved oak finials encrusted with moss, suggest that a beautiful, well-worn garden awaits. **3 Cobbled or carved stone details** for managing the flow of water require a little more effort than modern surface drainage solutions, but have far more character. **4 Encourage self-seeders, such as *Corydalis ochroleuca*** (best in damp shade, but will take some sun), that will happily festoon walls and gloomy corners with a froth of creamy-white flowers for several months. **5 The size of this chunky fencing** in north Wales perfectly suits the scale of the stones in the house in the background. Imagine how much character would be lost if a standard fence had been used instead. **6 Polypody (*Polypodium vulgare*) and maidenhair spleenwort (*Asplenium trichomanes*)** are particularly successful ferns for growing in walls. Both are drought tolerant, but need consistent watering until they are properly established.



Ferns and figs grow at the base of walls in the garden at Plas yn Rhiw, north Wales. Well bedded, irregular cobbles are kept clean in the middle by the polishing of feet.

KRISTY RAMAGE



The old door, iron girders and partially painted and weathered brick wall could so easily have been destroyed when this new garden was created. Instead, designers Rupert Wheeler and Paul Gazerwitz have cleverly enhanced and celebrated what they found.

MARIANNE MAJERUS/MMGI

Garden details

Old gardens are full of invention and idiosyncrasy. When it comes to garden details, don't accept that one size fits all. Because materials and craftsmen were far more localised in the past, elements such as gates, fences, benches and pots were all more particular to place than they are now. Vernacular details are disappearing, but old photographs and drawings or written descriptions in old books are still around to interpret and often a bespoke, craftsman-made gate or bench is no more expensive than a quality off-the-peg version. If you are lucky enough to find antique pieces, be prepared to work at settling them in. There are often repairs to undertake or new elements to add. For instance, you may find one gate finial where you need two, but persevere; a craftsman may be able to copy it for you, and you can choose to either celebrate old and new side by side or balance them by lime washing both.

Patinas develop naturally through chemical reactions and have a complexity and subtlety impossible to recreate with paint (although some painters are skilled at producing patina-like finishes that are glorious in their own right). Porous materials, such as terracotta, stone and concrete, can be weathered with an application of plain yoghurt. Soak the surface in water for 15 minutes, then brush on plain yoghurt. Keep the surface cool and moist for four to six weeks and it will form a green patina, gradually gaining more white spots as it ages. ☐

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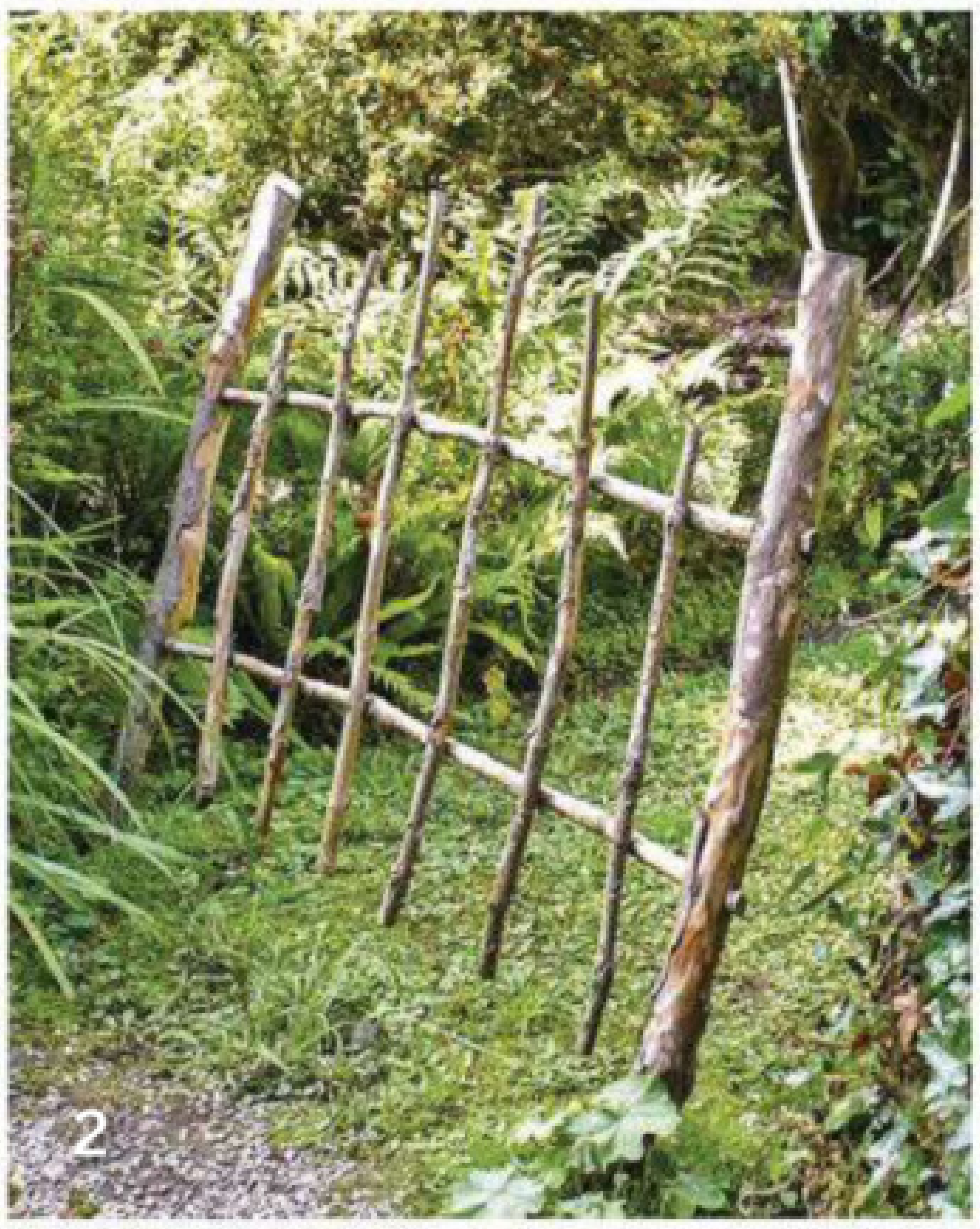
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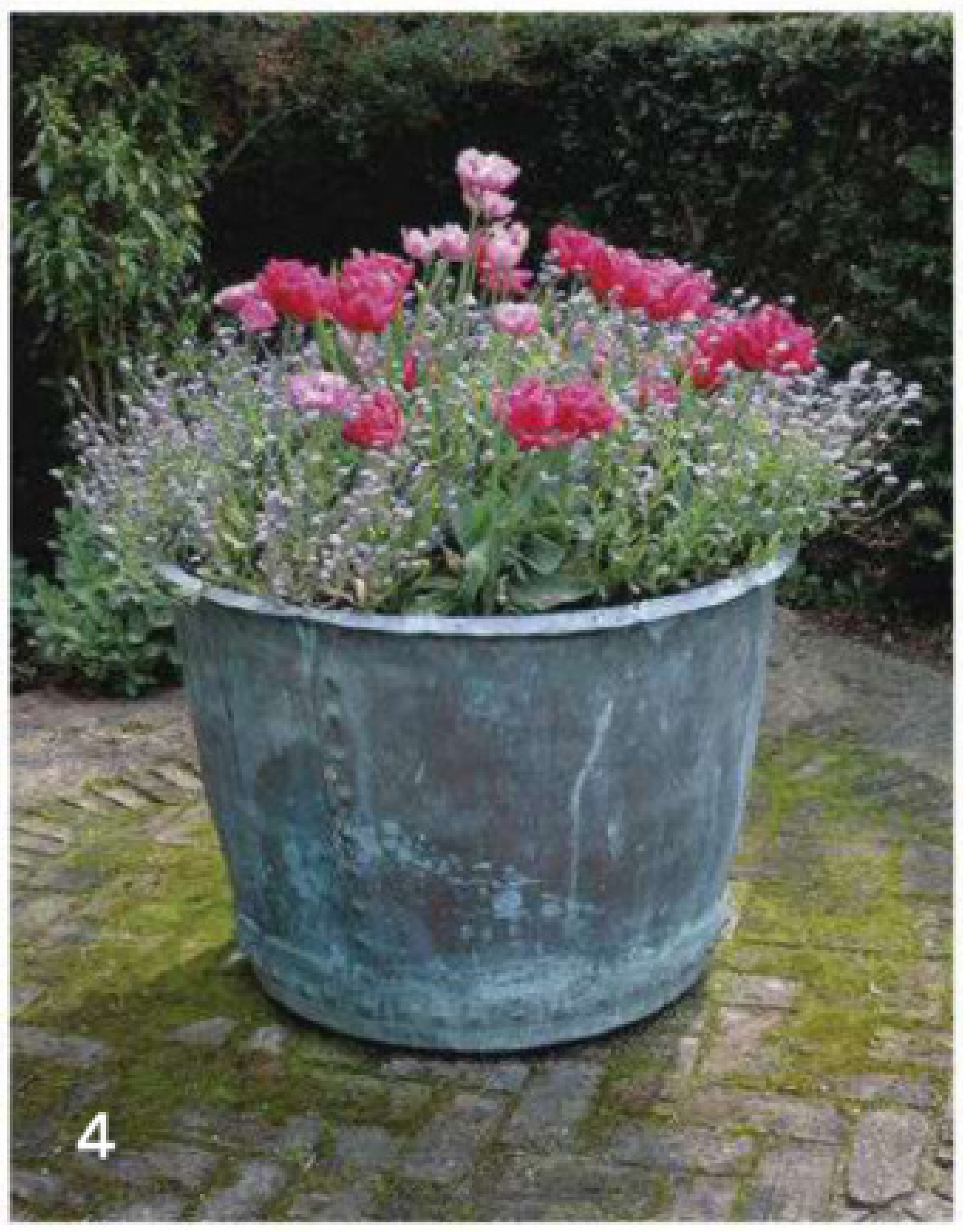
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1,3 BRITT WILLOUGHBY DYER; 2,5,6 KRISTY RAMAGE; 4 SUZIE GIBBONS/GAP PHOTOS

1 Sculpture has been placed with great wit and drama throughout the garden at The Pant, by owners Camilla and Jeremy Swift. These classical busts sit on the banks of an amphitheatre. **2 Simple hazel structures,** such as this little gate at the entrance to a path, would have been commonplace in gardens of the past. **3 This ancient stone seat at Levens Hall in Cumbria** is almost engulfed by the hedge. Set seating in clipped niches in hedges to give them this air of mystery. **4 Originally used to heat water for the laundry**, traditional 'coppers' develop a wonderful verdigris patination that blends well with many types of paving. **5 A wood store is essential for keeping the hearth burning** in old houses, so an old garden should inevitably accommodate one. In the garden at The Old Rectory in Gloucestershire, designed by Dan Pearson, gardener Ian Mannall has made full use of the beautiful decorative qualities of stacked wood. **6 Old galvanised dolly tubs** make wonderful garden planters. They are a generous size, are easily drilled for drainage, run no risk of frost damage and are of a soft grey tone that perfectly complements old walls and garden greenery.

Thomas Pakenham

Meet the writer and historian who has dedicated his life to trees: gathering their seed, nurturing them and harbouring a soft spot for ginkgos and monkey puzzles

WORDS ANNIE GATTI PORTRAIT CHARLIE HOPKINSON

Thomas Pakenham, celebrated author, historian and arborist, is not a man for formality. He prefers not to use his title, the 8th Earl of Longford, which he inherited on the death of his father in 2001, and has restored the original name of the 1,500-acre family demesne in County Westmeath in Ireland – Pakenham Hall Castle becoming Tullynally Castle.

Although Thomas, now 83, grew up in the suburbs of Oxford and went to university there, he regards Ireland, where he moved permanently in 1964, as home. We meet at his west London bolthole, which is a short tube ride from Kew Gardens where he's been closely observing the new Double Borders with camera and notebook. As he is the author of four books on trees, starting with his bestselling *Meetings with Remarkable Trees* and concluding with his 2015 title *The Company of Trees*, I was expecting that we would launch into the subject straight away. But Thomas is intent on first showing me a new discovery: a notebook dated 1940 in which he had pasted, aged seven, a watercolour of a pool with a romantic birch tree painted for him by his grandfather. "He knew I was fascinated by water," explains Thomas, who went on to design large-scale waterworks at Tullynally. But his grandfather's birch tree has significance too, as trees of all shapes and sizes were to become Thomas's lifelong passion. Another early memory features a horse chestnut tree in the family garden with branches low enough to allow a spirited boy to climb up. Clutching his great uncle's Boer War rifle, Thomas would sit in the tree, keeping an eye out for German parachutists. "I do remember loving that tree, where I was going to make my last stand," he says, smiling.

Fast forward 20 years and Thomas, by then a journalist with *The Sunday Telegraph*, prematurely inherited the parklands of Tullynally, with its loss-making farm and extortionate death duties. Embarking on the daunting task of making the estate pay, he also wrote his first historical book (*The Year of Liberty*, a masterly history of the Irish rebellion of 1798) and, in 1964, married his wife Valerie, who took charge of Tullynally's flower garden.

Thomas's first large-scale tree planting was a commercial plantation of Sitka spruce. After a great storm in 1973 created large gaps in the woodland Pleasure Garden, Thomas was inspired to make his first ornamental plantings, which included seven magnolias, three cryptomerias and a *Zelkova serrata*. "I brought the trees back from Hillier's [nursery, in Hampshire] via Belfast, in the middle of The Troubles [the 30-year armed conflict over Northern Ireland's constitutional status], on the roof of the car," explains Thomas. He also planted weeping willows along the banks of the upper lake. Disappointingly, these trees died of a foliar disease but Thomas was not defeated: he replanted, and the second batch is still growing strongly. "You shouldn't always think your trees have died for reasons of soil, climate or exposure. Sometimes it can just be because you bought a bad clone, and it's worth trying again," he says.

Released from the management of the farm in 1987, Thomas began an energetic regime of planting at Tullynally, collecting seed in the Himalayas, China and South America and, with his historian's eye, chronicling specimen trees in Ireland (where he founded the Irish Tree Society), Britain and beyond. Trees, for him, take on near-human attributes: the young beech he has raised from seed are "pushy adolescents", while the task of removing oaks from his congested arboretum feels like "murdering your friends".

It was the lure of filling the garden with new sylvan personalities that took him on his first of several adventurous plant-hunting trips and although he's bagged hundreds of tree seeds he has also become increasingly interested in herbaceous plants. He particularly treasures the three pots of *Primula florindae* that have become more than 1,000 plants creating a sheet of yellow alongside the stream. "There's a lot of confusion about collecting seeds," he admits. "I make no bones about it. If there are millions of seeds from a common plant lying on the ground and you pick a few up, I don't see the problem, as long as you're not selling them."

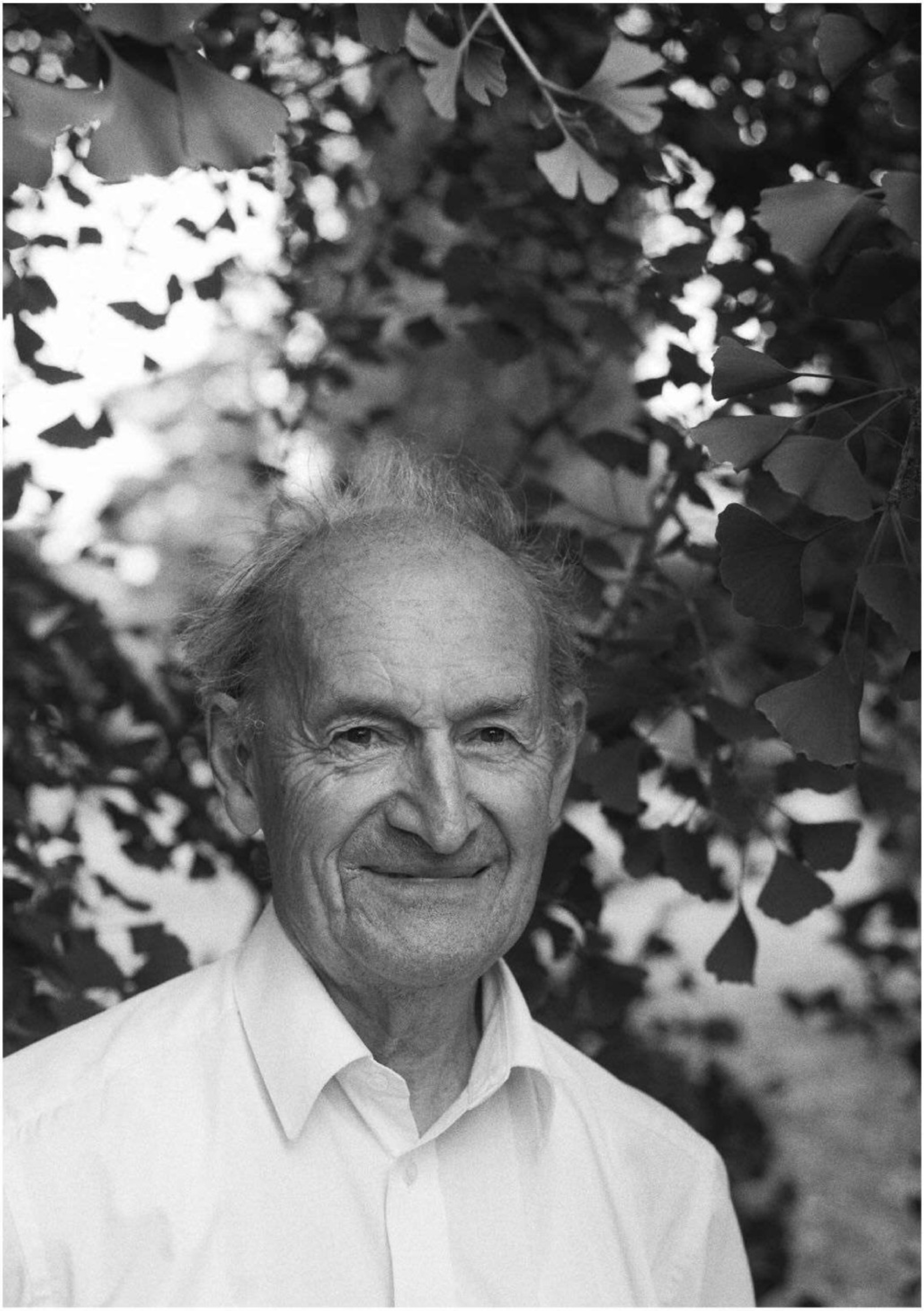
His trips have also influenced his views on the "raft of diseases" that are attacking many of our long-established trees. "My take on it is to plant oriental species from the same genera, which seem to be immune to these particular diseases because they co-evolved with them." He's been doing this successfully at Tullynally for several years with Chinese oak, ash and Indian horse chestnut.

As new grandchildren arrive, new trees are planted in their honour, including a pair of ginkgos, which, along with monkey puzzles, are his favourite species. "When you're in your old age, as long as your eyes are still working, a thing like a young tree, getting better every year, is a most delightful encouragement." □

USEFUL INFORMATION
Tullynally Castle Gardens, Tullynally, Castlepollard, County Westmeath, Republic of Ireland. Tel +353 (0)44 966 1159, tullynallycastle.ie. Open April to September.

NEXT MONTH Retiring RHS executive vice president Jim Gardiner.

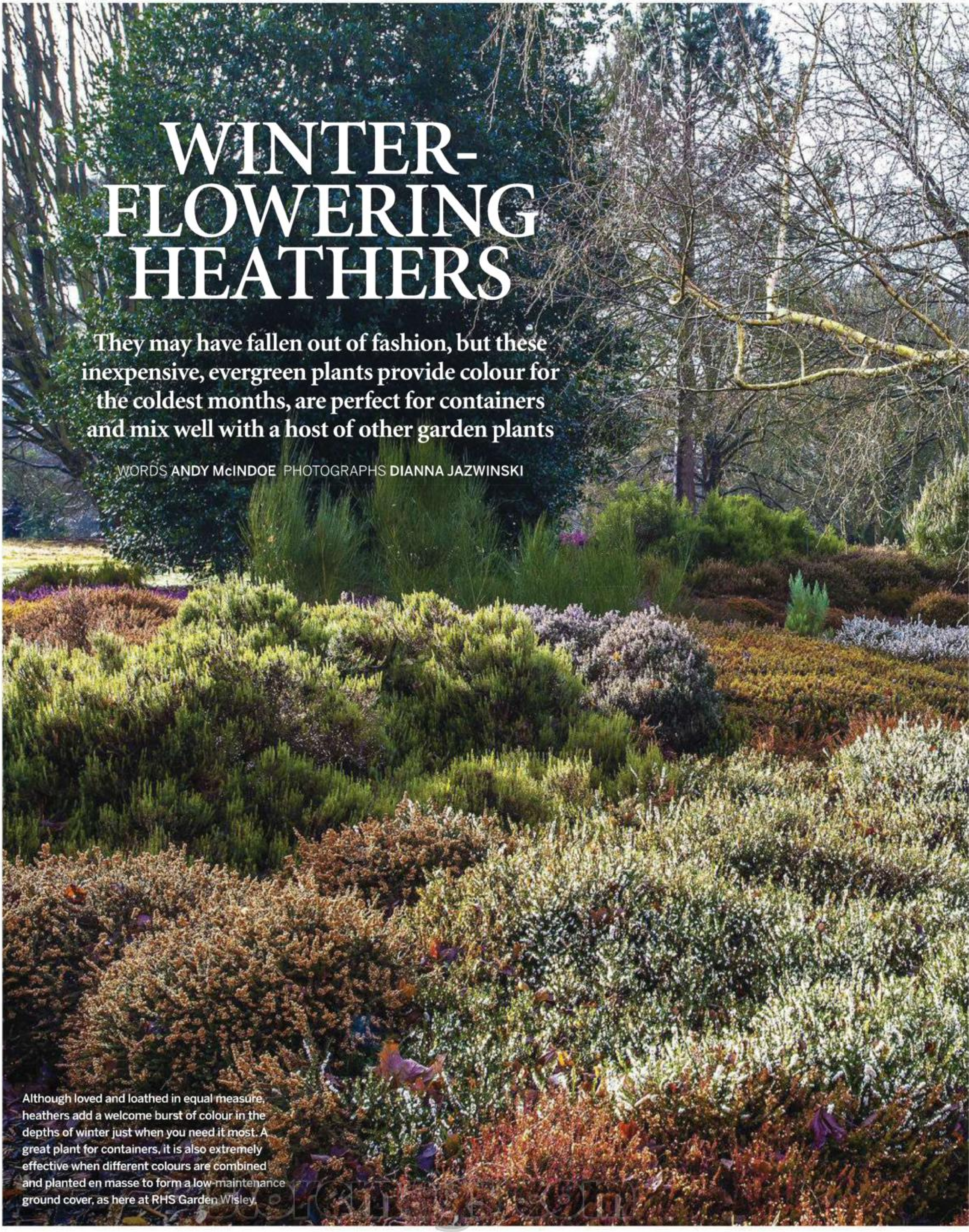
Trees, for Thomas, take on near-human attributes: young beech are "pushy adolescents" while removing oaks from his congested arboretum feels like "murdering friends"



WINTER-FLOWERING HEATHERS

They may have fallen out of fashion, but these inexpensive, evergreen plants provide colour for the coldest months, are perfect for containers and mix well with a host of other garden plants

WORDS **ANDY McINDOE** PHOTOGRAPHS **DIANNA JAZWINSKI**



Although loved and loathed in equal measure, heathers add a welcome burst of colour in the depths of winter just when you need it most. A great plant for containers, it is also extremely effective when different colours are combined and planted en masse to form a low-maintenance ground cover, as here at RHS Garden Wisley.

Storemags.com

In brief

What Hardy, dwarf shrubs, with flowers in white or shades of pink and red. Most (around 860 species) belong to the genus *Erica*, but some belong to the genera *Calluna* and *Daboecia*.

Origins Most heathers (around 90 per cent) are from South Africa, but the winter flowering heathers featured here are from the northern hemisphere, mostly from alpine and colder areas of Europe. A few are from warmer regions of southern Europe.

Season Most bloom from late autumn, right through winter and into spring.

Size Heathers range in height from 15cm to 75cm, and have a 20-75cm spread. Some are larger.

Conditions *Erica carnea* and *Erica* x *darleyensis* (a cross between *E. carnea* and *E. erigena*) are both lime-tolerant; others need neutral to acid soil. All need sun or semi-shade on well-drained soil, some cultivars can survive extreme cold.

Andy McIndoe is a horticulturist and author with a special interest in trees and shrubs. He has been responsible for 25 gold-medal winning exhibits at RHS Chelsea Flower Shows.

The plants we refer to as heathers include ericas, callunas and daboecias. Ericas comprise around 860 species from the familiar dwarf shrubs to small trees. Callunas and daboecias differ from ericas only in flower structure and growth habit, and each is made up of a single species. The hardy, dwarf forms of all three are the ones grown in gardens. Evergreen, easy to grow, small, manageable and long-flowering, they are the ideal low-maintenance plant, although their image suffered after their rise in popularity in the 1960s when they became associated with dwarf conifers and dull grasses. I remember the advertisements for 'winter bloomers': less trouble and with a longer flowering period than roses, they were the first progression towards planting for a winter garden.

Heathers come into their own in winter when their appeal as a pot of instant colour puts them ahead of most other hardy plants. But there is an even greater reason for the popularity of cultivars of *Erica carnea* and *Erica* x *darleyensis*: they are lime-tolerant. Unlike the callunas, which need acid soil, these heathers thrive in most gardens, a fact that was seen as a miracle during their heyday. They are inexpensive to buy, often sold in small pots for planting in groups to achieve ground cover and greater impact. They are also ideal to add instant colour to patio pots, and are extremely hardy and weather-tolerant, withstanding the wet and cold more successfully than most other autumn and winter container plants.

Winter-flowering heathers have another great attribute: they are bee-friendly. They are a lifeline for bumblebees and solitary bees, which do not store food and emerge in mild spells in winter and early spring.

Outwardly there is very little difference between *Erica carnea* and *Erica* x *darleyensis*. Generally the former is shorter and mat-forming, while the latter is taller, a little more vigorous and mound-forming with a ▷

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.

▷ longer flowering period. *Erica carnea* is hardier, originating from high alpine areas, hence its compact, low-growing habit. *Erica* x *darleyensis* is often more of a low, loose shrub and perhaps mixes more easily with other plants. It makes good, weed-suppressing ground cover. In both cases, size and habit vary according to cultivar.

The flower colour palette is limited: from white, through shades of pink to a deep red. As with many plants, there are certain classic cultivars that have not only stood the test of time, but have also given rise to sports and improved offspring. *Erica* x *darleyensis* 'Darley Dale' (see page 68) is a good example. The original hybrid was found on a nursery in Derbyshire, and cultivars include the white-flowered *Erica* x *darleyensis* f. *albiflora* 'White Perfection' (page 69). I love to see this used as ground cover around white-barked birch trees.

At the other end of the colour spectrum, the dark-leaved, red-flowered *Erica carnea* 'Myretoun Ruby' is striking planted with purple-leaved heucheras or the deliciously dark-leaved *Pittosporum tenuifolium* 'Tom Thumb'.

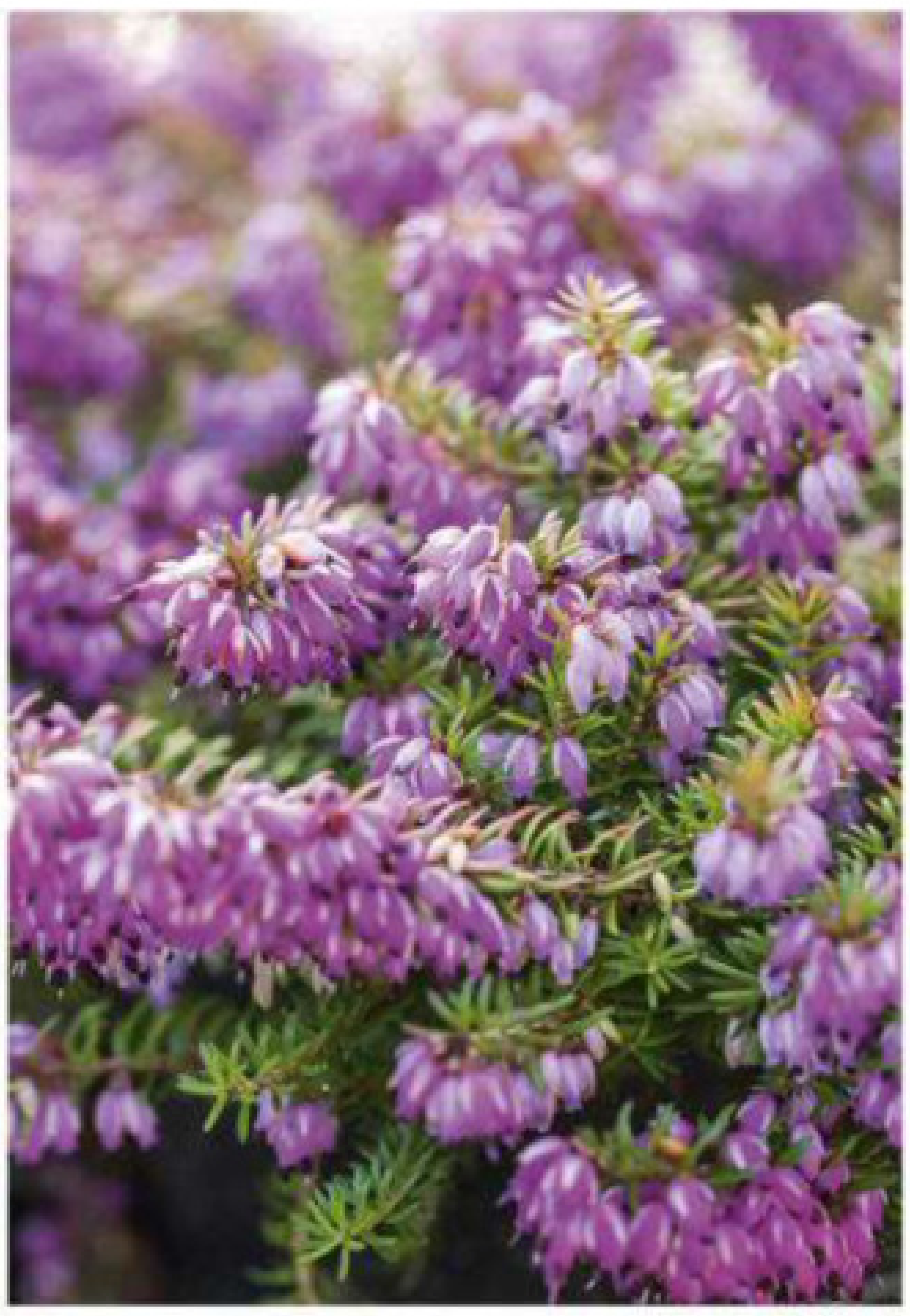
Some cultivars have gold or bronze foliage that add colour at ground level, although the combination of pink flowers and yellow foliage is not pleasing to everyone. Some produce compact heads of blooms at the tips of the shoots; in others the blooms crowd a length of the stems. These cultivars make excellent cut flowers, and lend themselves to informal garden and wedding posies.

As the most popular ericas flower in winter and spring, there is increasing interest in callunas that bloom in autumn through to early winter to fill that gap in the season. These so-called bud-blooming heathers are not lime-tolerant, but are often used as temporary colour in pots and containers where their soil preference can be ignored. Some make good garden plants for neutral to acid soil. They produce slender spikes of feathery foliage covered with elegant, pearly bud flowers in autumn and early winter.

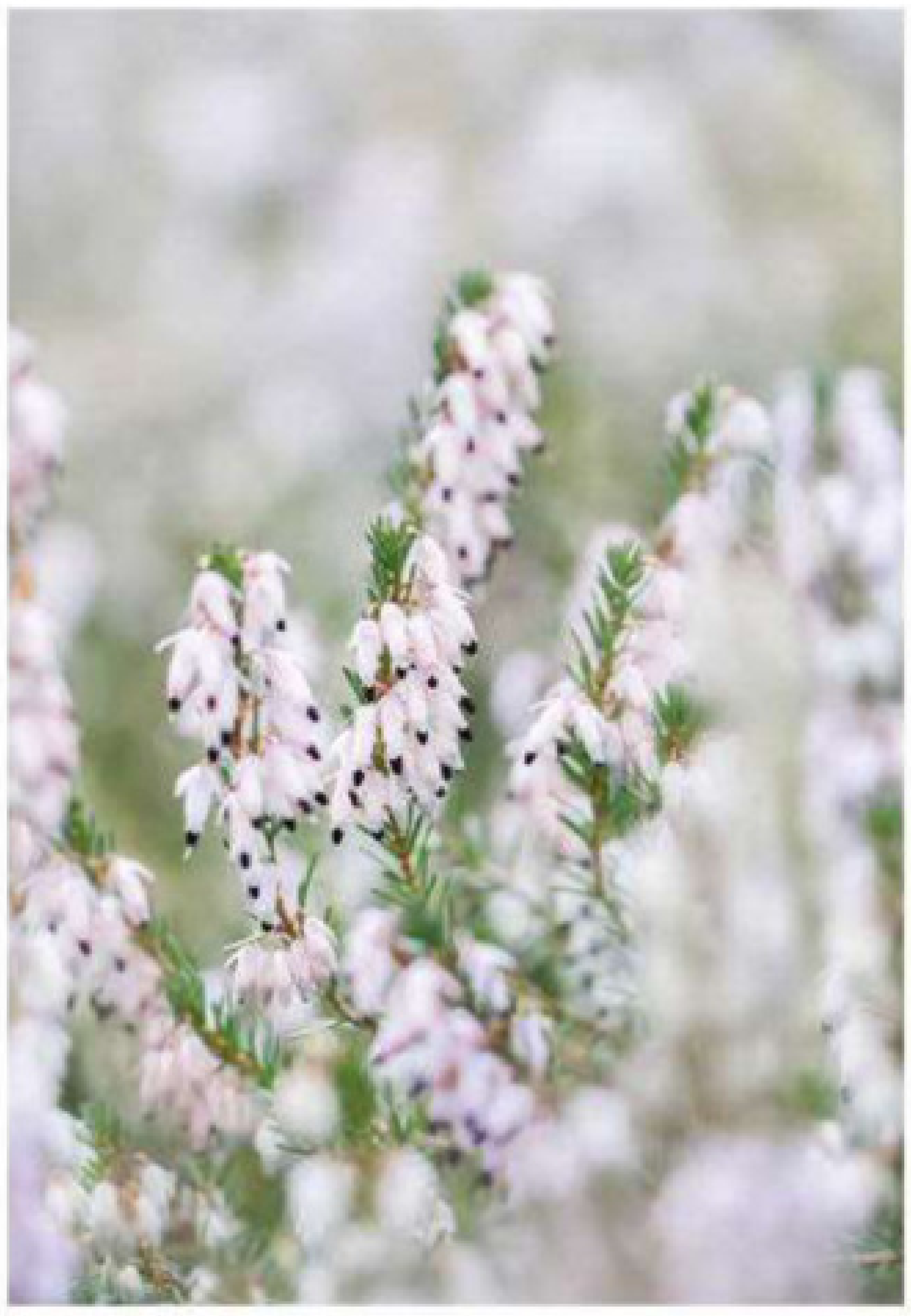
The bud-blooming heathers have appeal, but they lack the hardy, great-value endurance of the ericas that, for me, are the real winners. How many other winter-flowering plants sparkle so briliantly in the frost and snow and keep going into spring?

- Andy's recommendations for winter-flowering heathers continue over the next six pages.

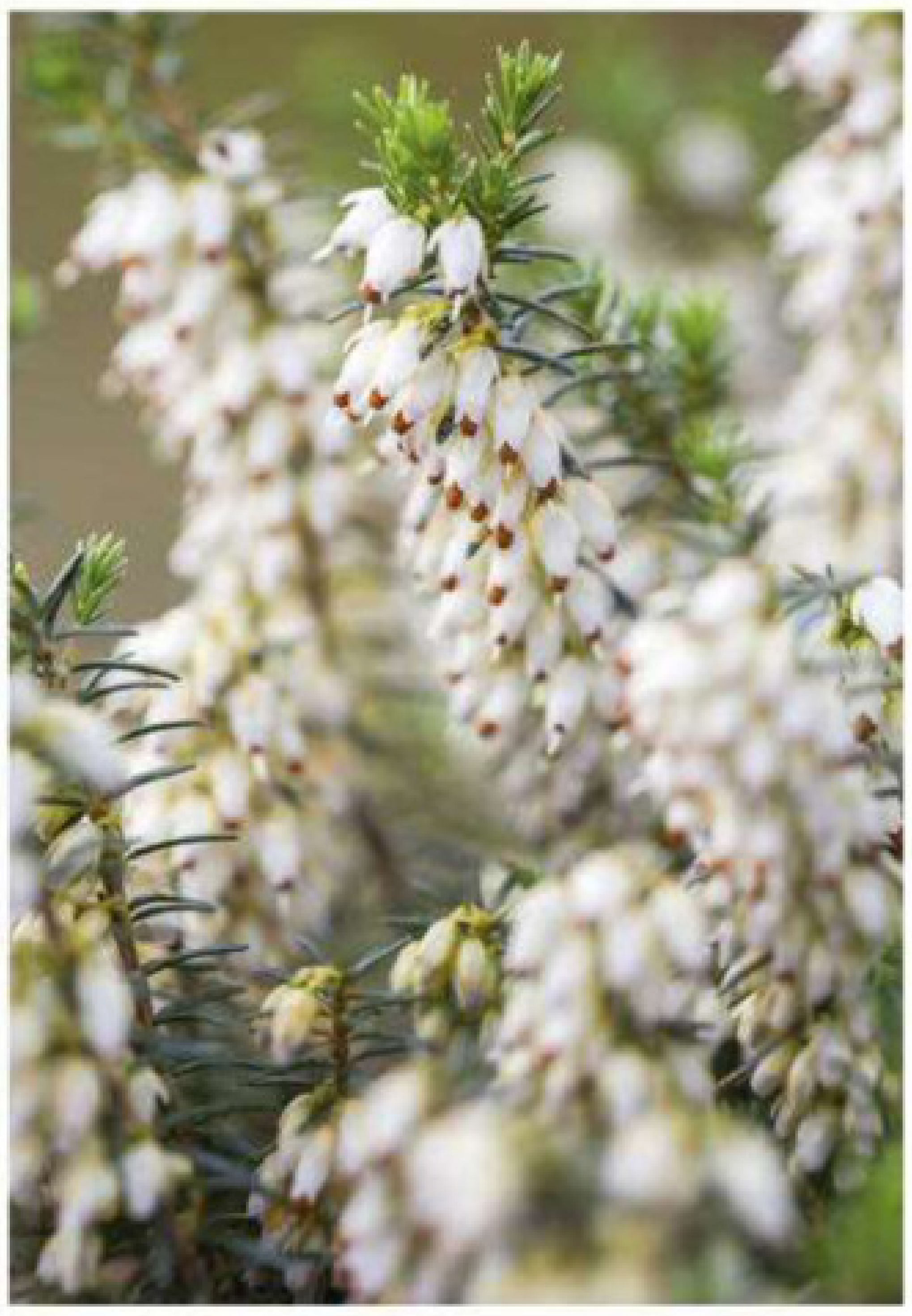
Erica carnea



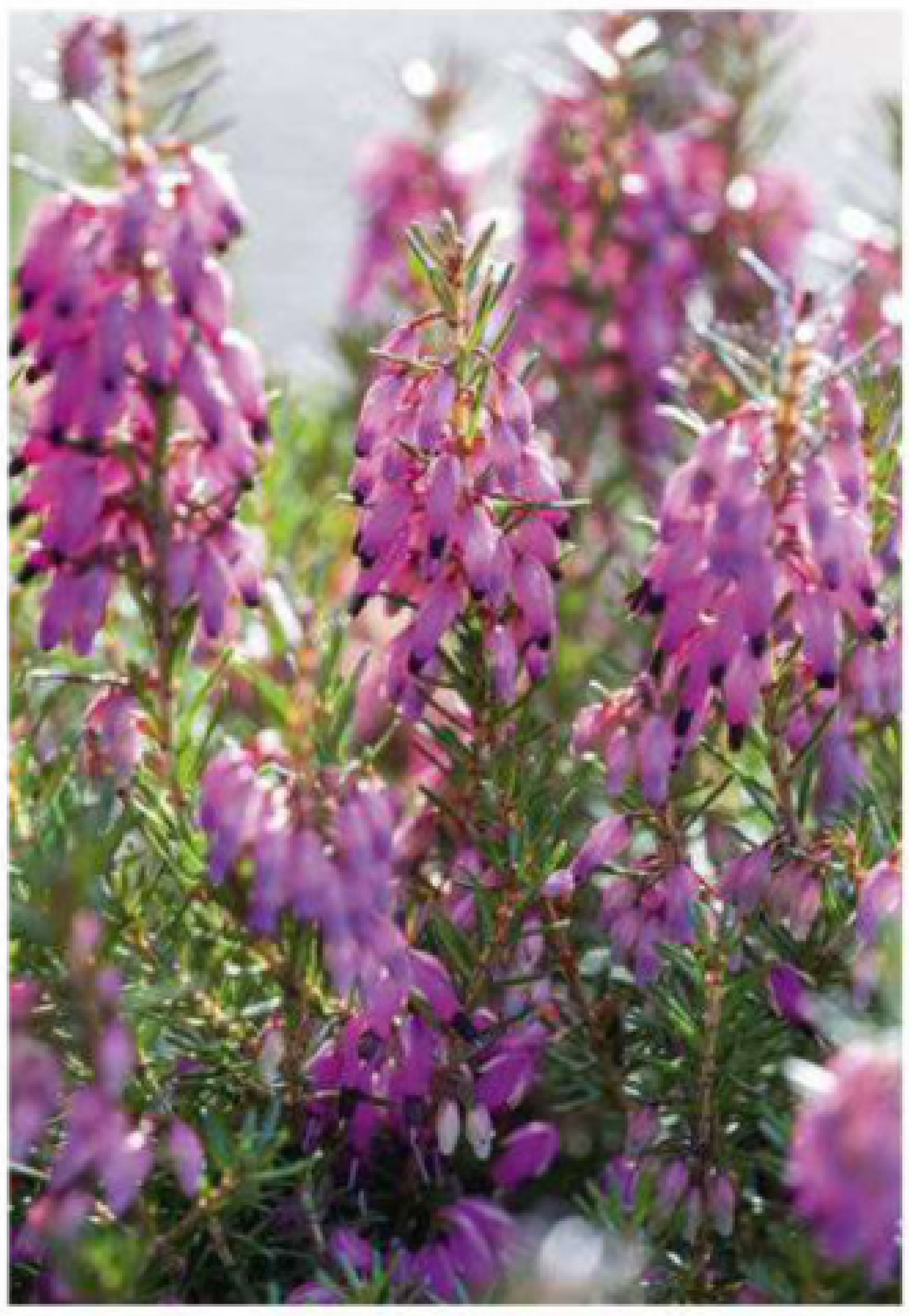
ERICA CARNEA F. _AUREIFOLIA_ 'BELL'S EXTRA SPECIAL'
Compact with sparse, whisky-coloured foliage. Heliotrope, almost-red blooms from late winter to mid spring. Bred from 'Myretoun Ruby'.
15cm x 45cm. RHS H7, USDA 5a-9b[†].



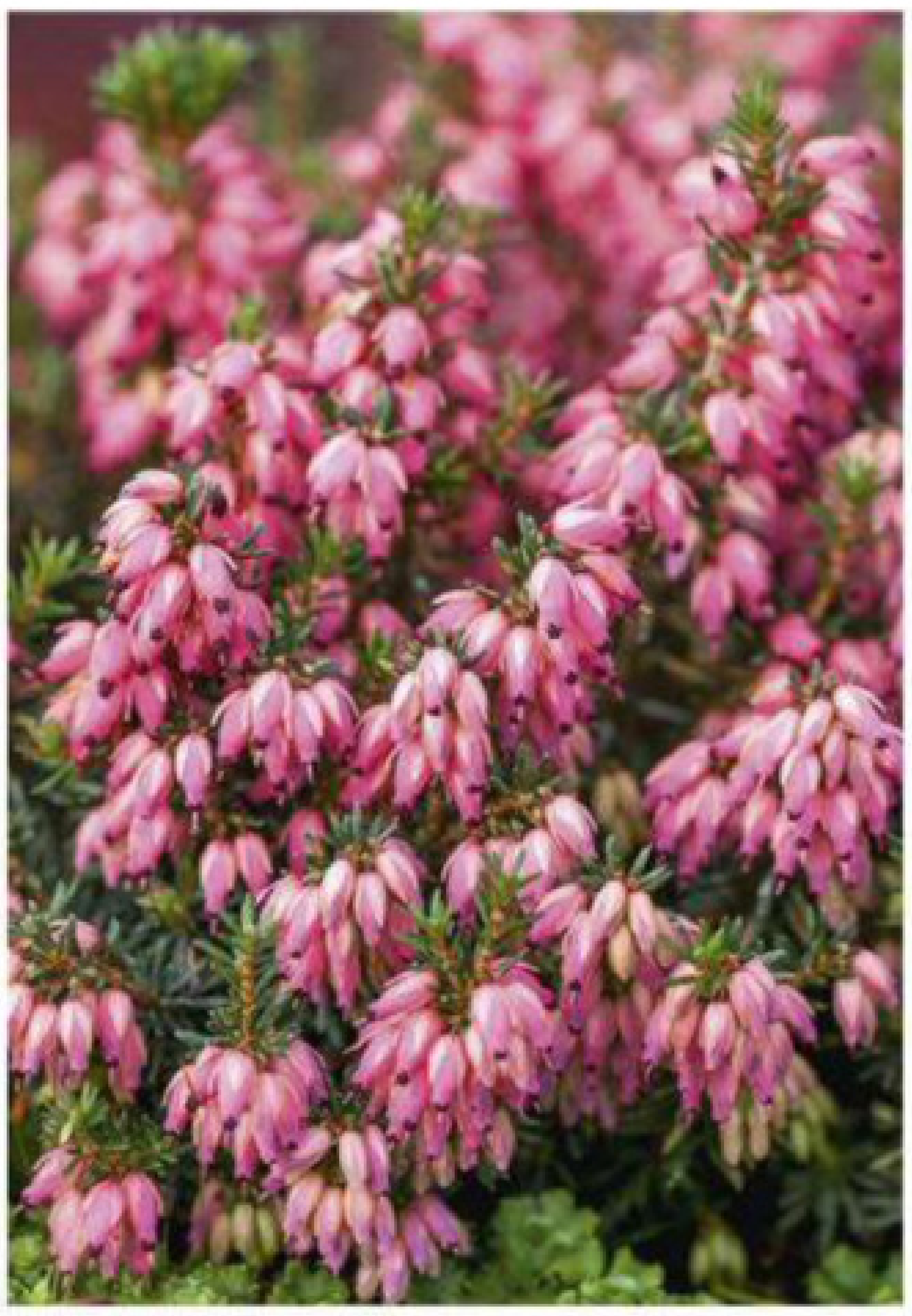
E. CARNEA 'CLARE WILKINSON'
Vigorous and trailing with long shoots clothed in mid-green foliage. Shell-pink flowers in long spikes in late winter through to late spring.
A long season of nectar and pollen.
10cm x 45cm. RHS H7, USDA 5a-9b.



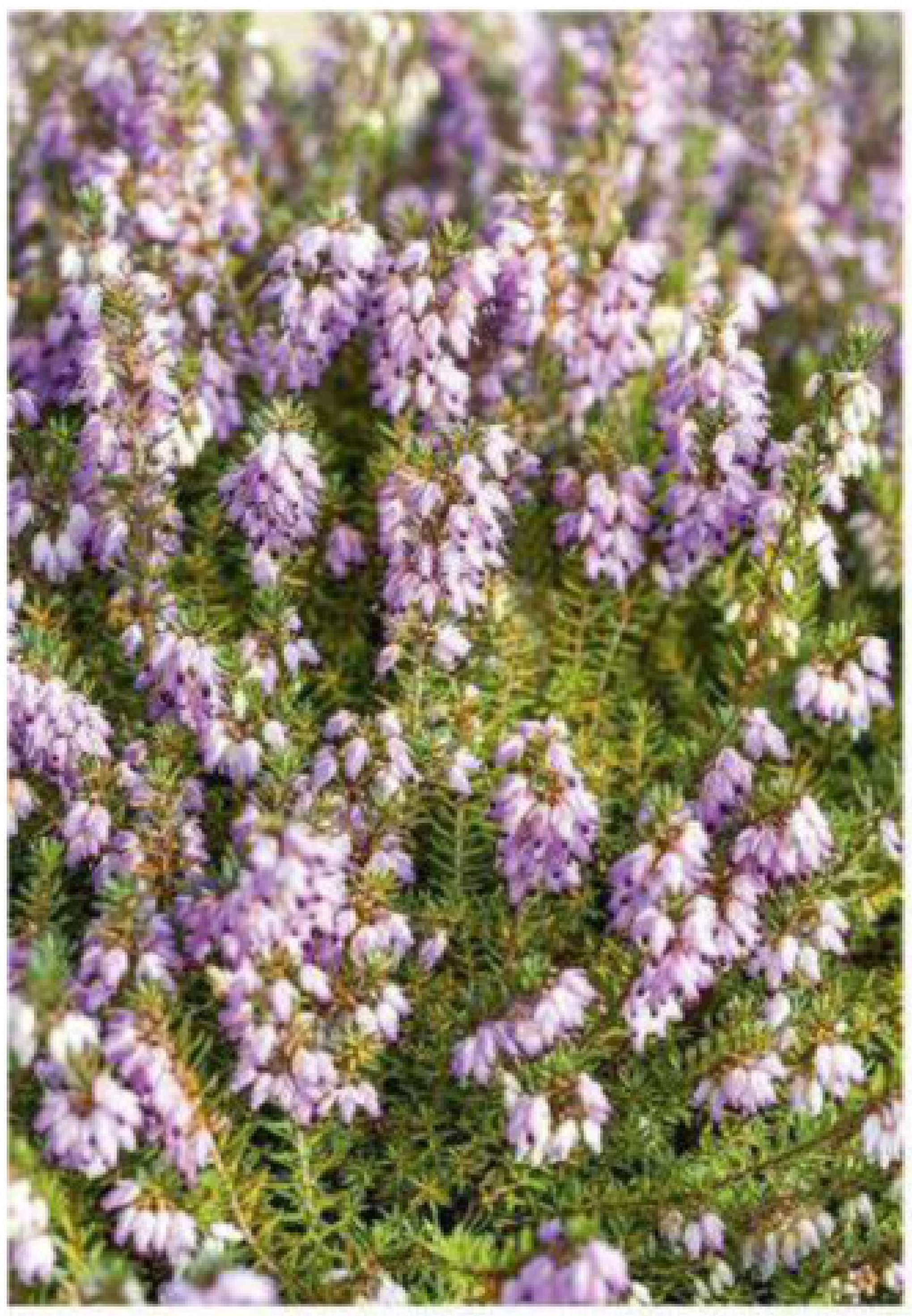
E. CARNEA F. _ALBA_ 'ISABELL'
Spreading mats of short, upright stems carry bright-green foliage. Pure-white flowers with brown stamens from late winter until early spring. Excellent in pots and containers.
15cm x 45cm. AGM*. RHS H7, USDA 5a-9b.



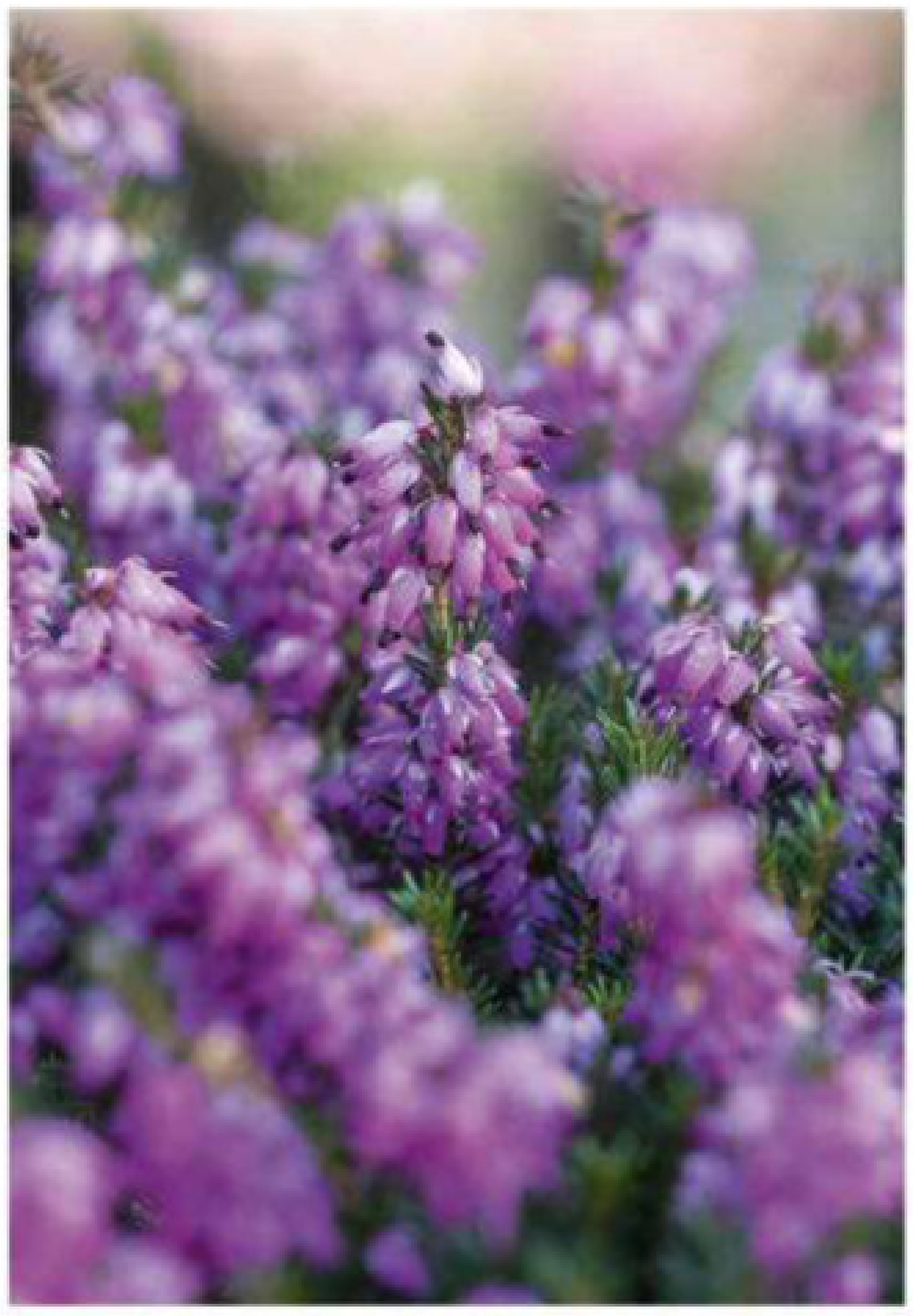
E. CARNEA 'NATHALIE
Glowing purple flowers from midwinter to mid spring. Compact and bristling with dark-green foliage and jewel-like flowers. Originated from seedlings of 'Myretoun Ruby'.
15cm x 45cm. AGM. RHS H7, USDA 5a-9b.



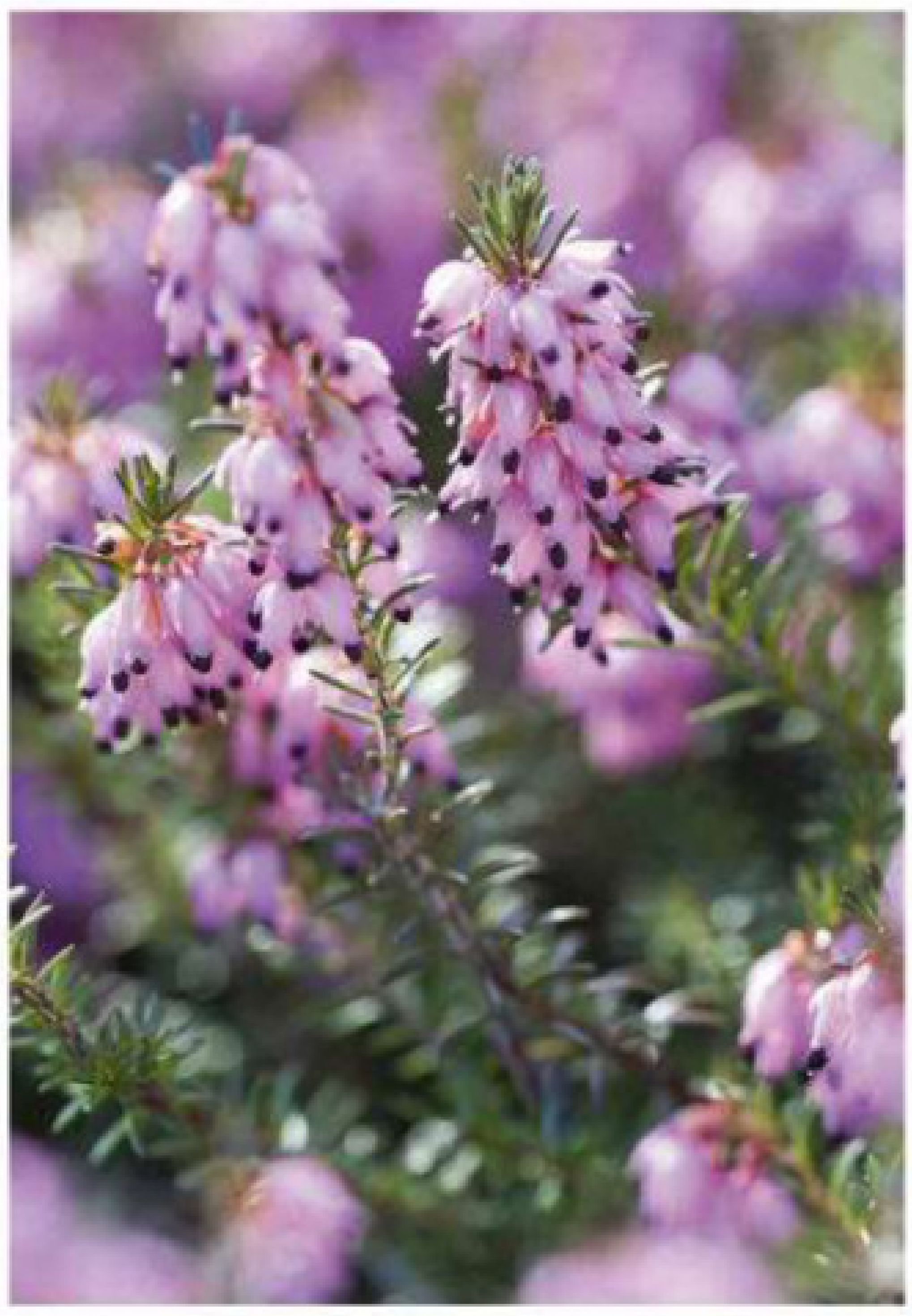
E. CARNEA 'CORINNA'
A compact, bushy heather with abundant, dark-green foliage. Cerise-pink flowers in late winter to mid spring. A good ground cover plant bred by Kurt Kramer in Germany. 15cm x 45cm. RHS H7, USDA 5a-9b.



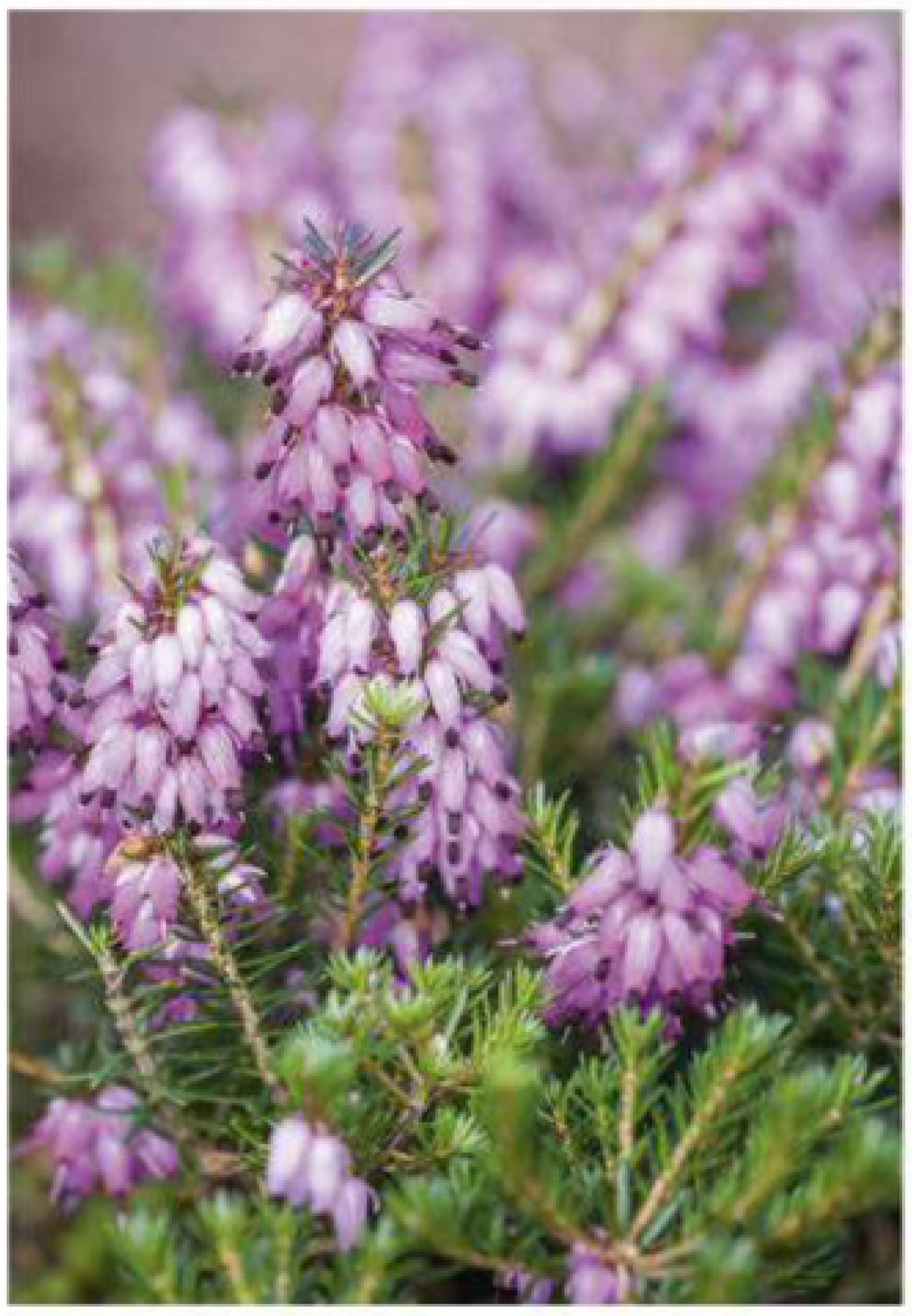
E. CARNEA 'DECEMBER RED'
Vigorous and spreading with mid-green foliage that forms low, loose mats. Pink flowers darken to red-pink as they age, opening in midwinter and lasting to early spring. 10cm x 30cm. RHS H7, USDA 5a-9b.



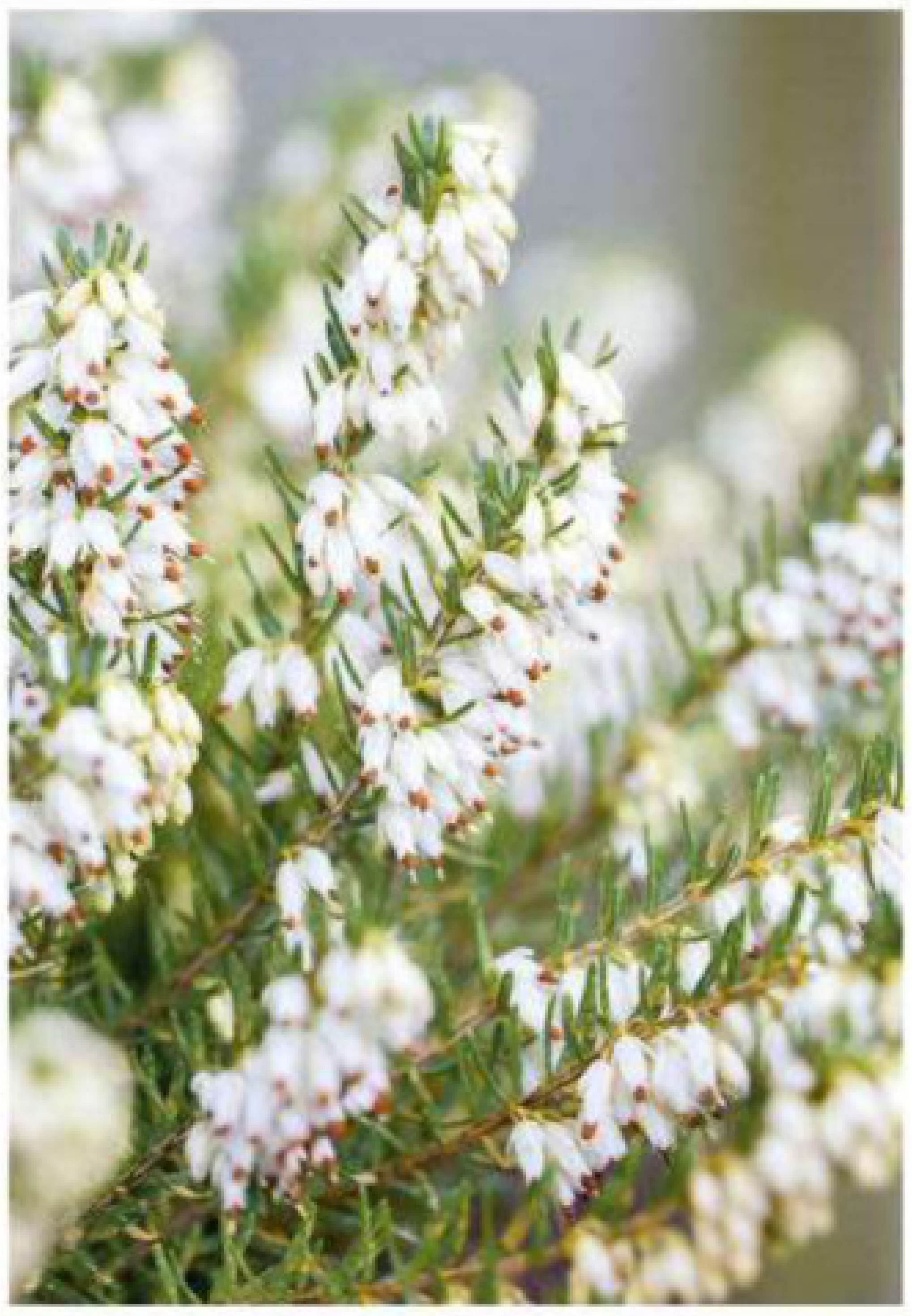
E. CARNEA 'EVA'
Neat and compact with dark-green foliage turning bronze in winter. Light-red flowers from late winter to mid spring. It is one of the earliest red-flowered heathers to bloom. 10cm x 30cm. AGM. RHS H7, USDA 5a-9b.



E. CARNEA 'SASKIA'
Unusual colouring with rose-pink flowers, darker towards the tips and clustered at the end of the shoots from late winter to mid spring. Lovely against mid-green foliage. 20cm x 30cm. RHS H7, USDA 5a-9b.

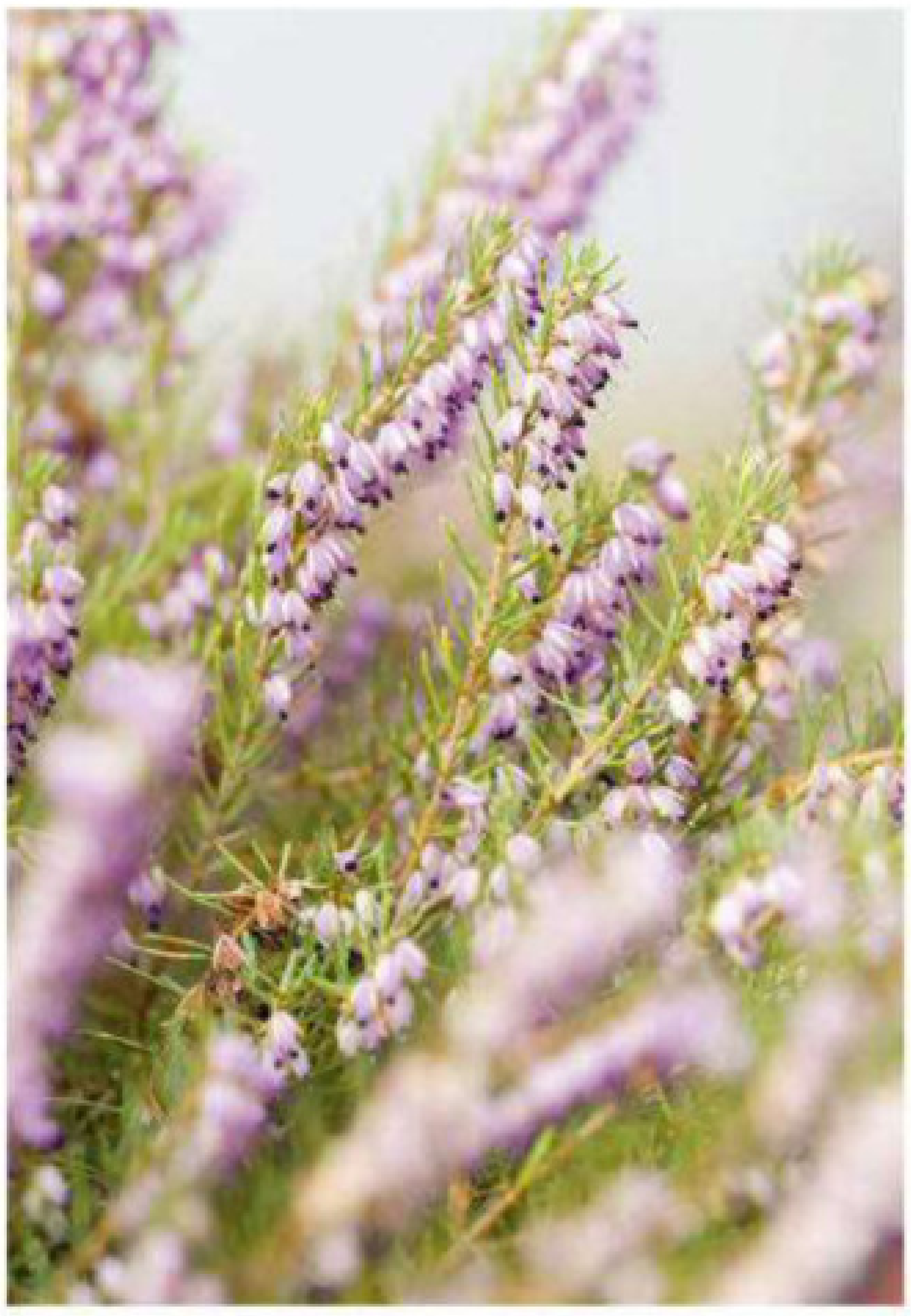


E. CARNEA 'WINTER RUBIN'
Formerly called 'Kramer's Rubin', this compact cultivar has dark-green foliage and clear-pink flowers from late winter to mid spring. Selected from seedlings of 'Myretoun Ruby'. 10cm x 30cm. RHS H7, USDA 5a-9b.

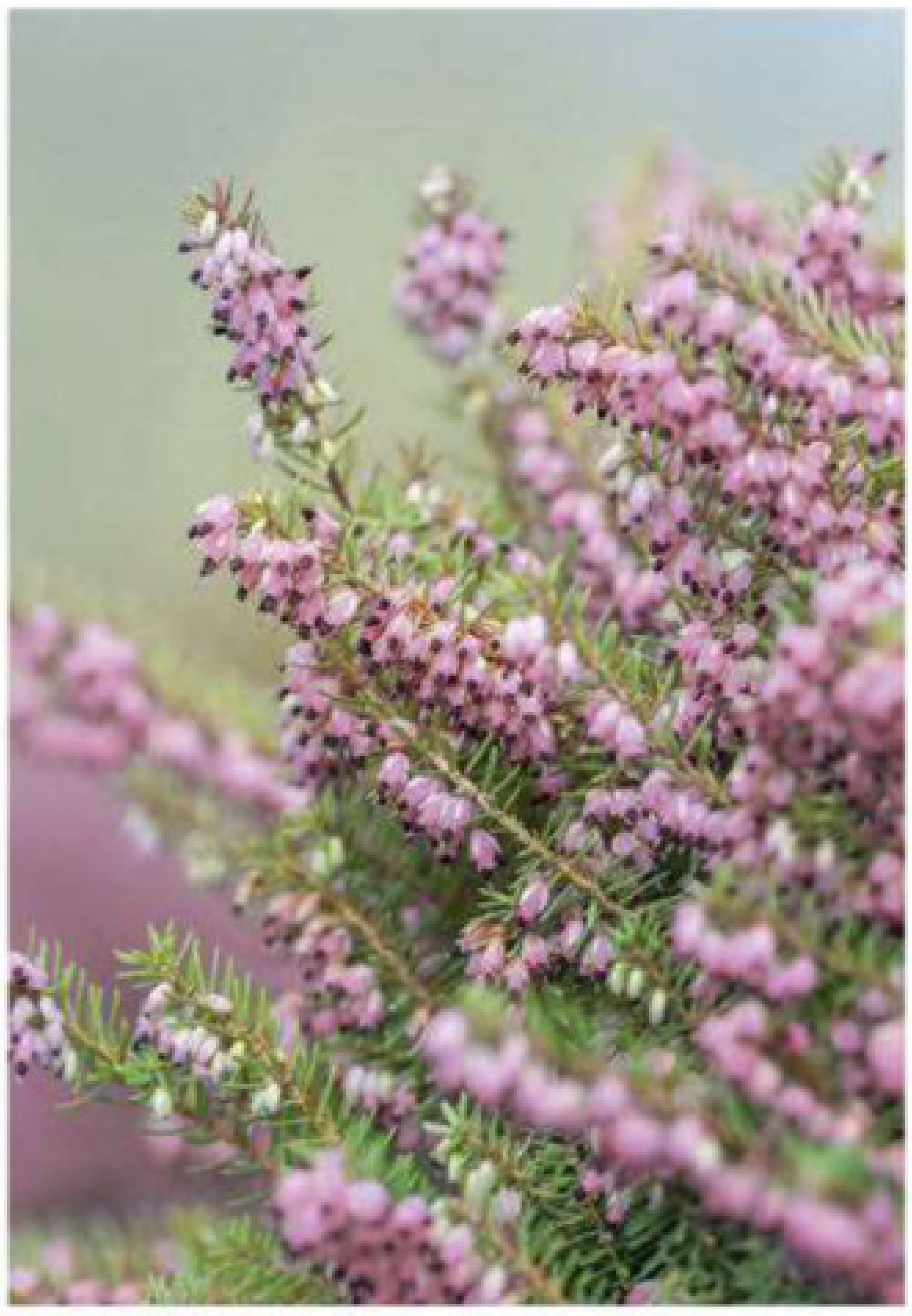


E. CARNEA F. ALBA 'WHITEHALL'
With pure-white flowers and a similar habit to 'Isabell' (see left), this cultivar starts to bloom earlier, in midwinter. The flower spikes are less dense and the brown stamens less prominent. 10cm x 30cm. RHS H7, USDA 5a-9b.

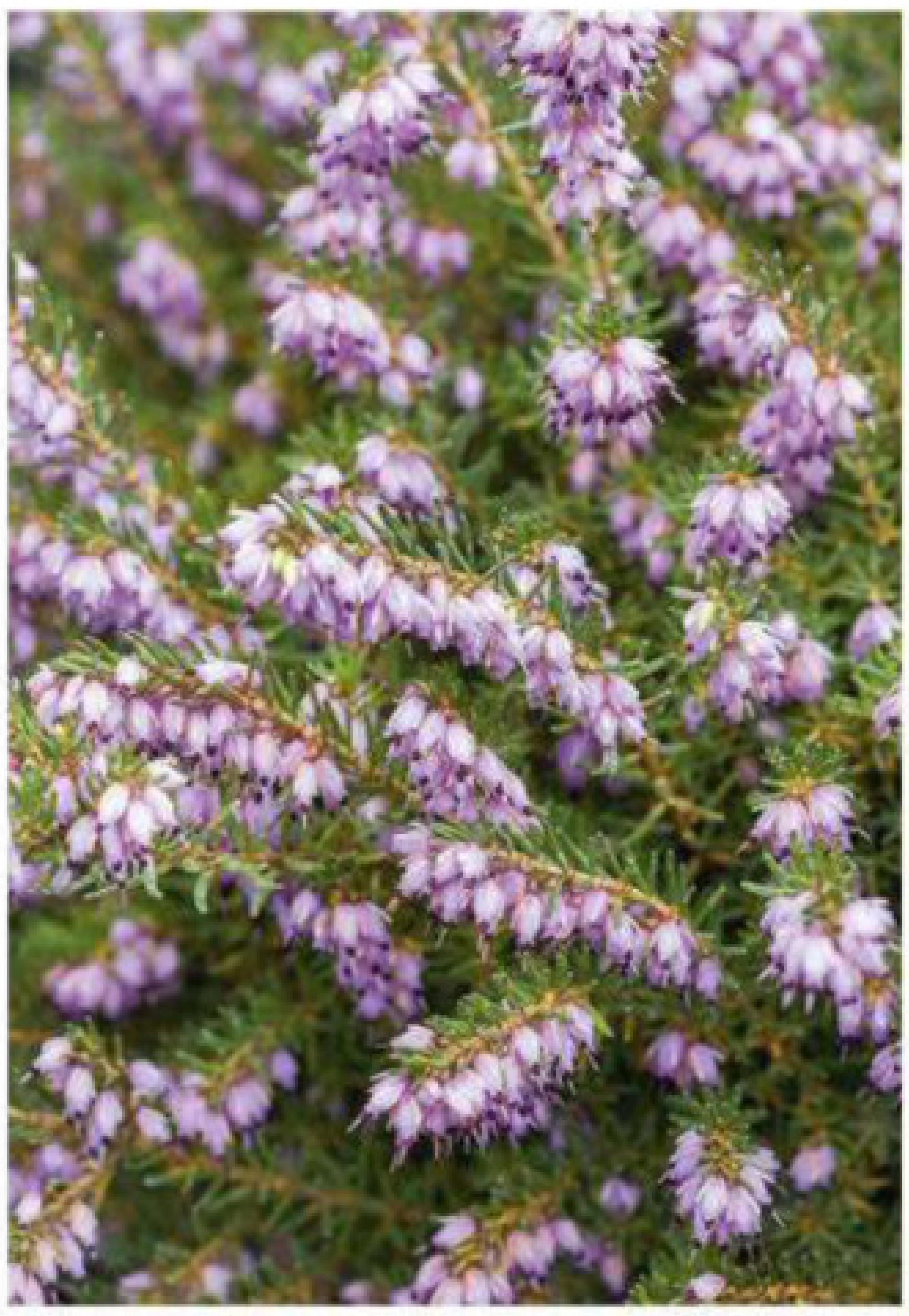
Erica x darleyensis



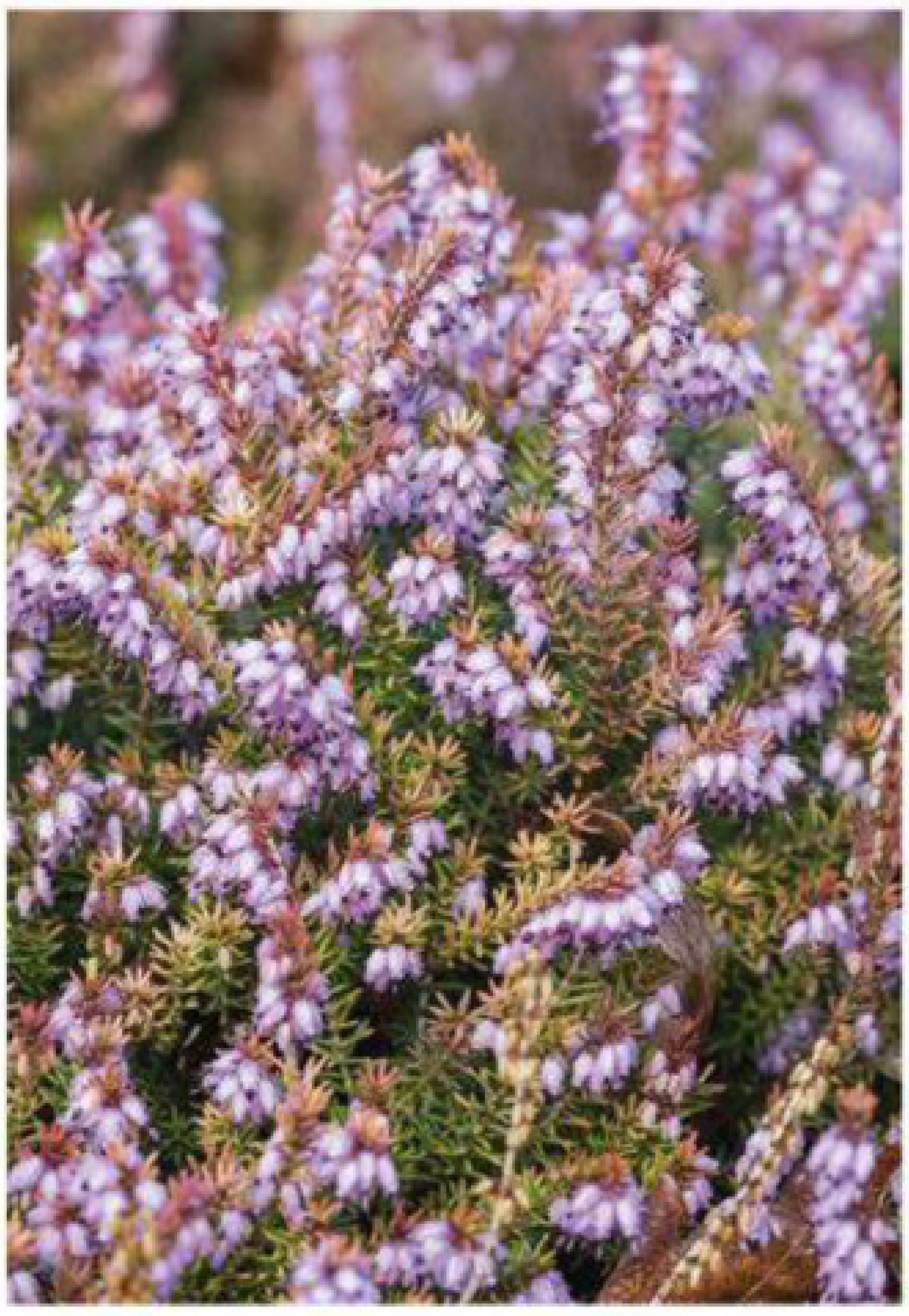
***E. X DARLEYENSIS* 'ARTHUR JOHNSON'**
Long spikes of magenta-pink flowers, darkening from midwinter to mid spring. Spreading habit with mid-green foliage, the spring shoots are tipped with cream.
45cm x 60cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 6a-8b.



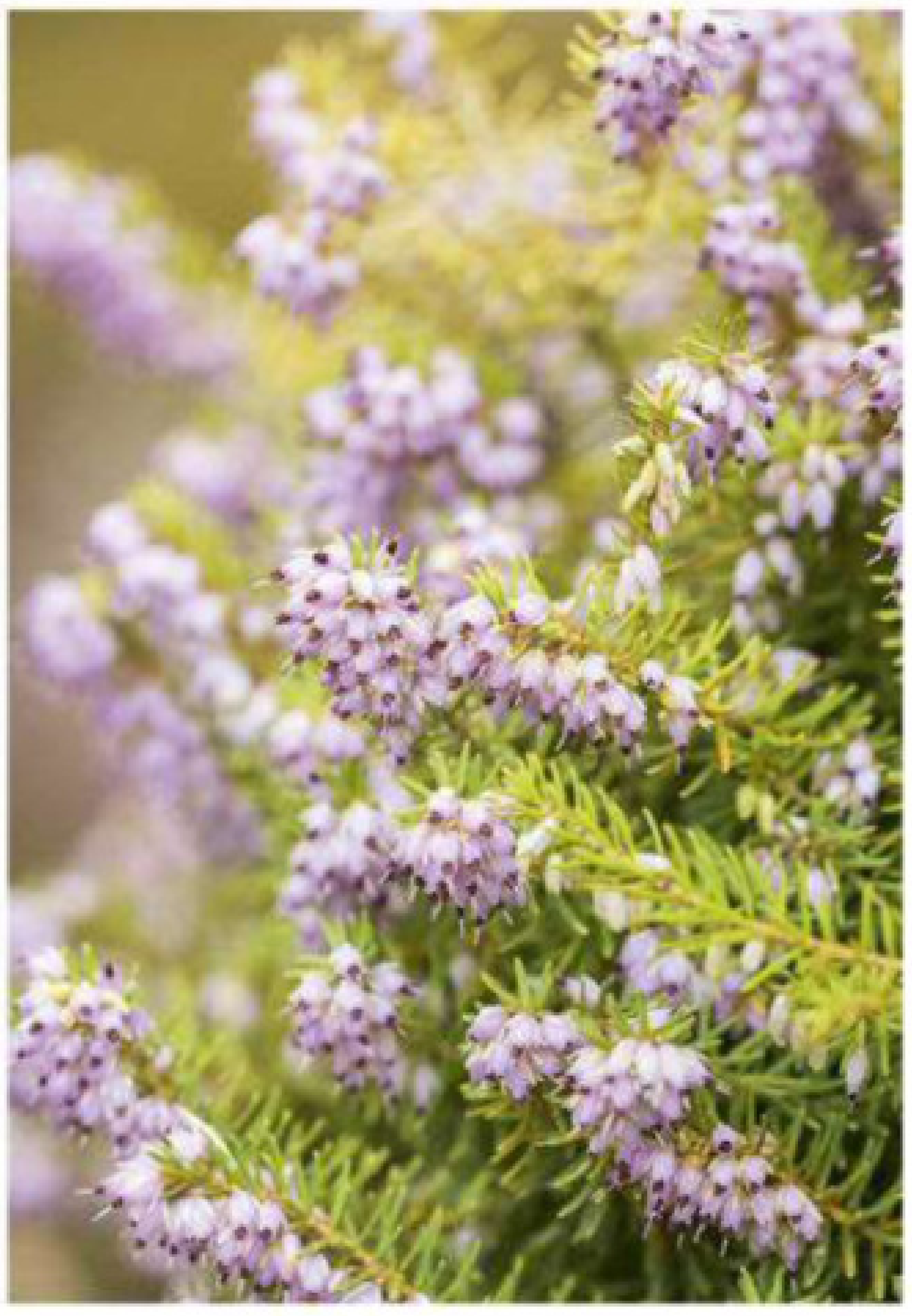
***E. X DARLEYENSIS* 'AURELIE BREGEON'**
Comparatively large, lilac-pink flowers from late autumn to spring on compact plants with mid-green foliage. A sport of 'Darley Dale', it's not as hardy as other cultivars. Great in pots.
30cm x 45cm. RHS H5, USDA 7a-9b.



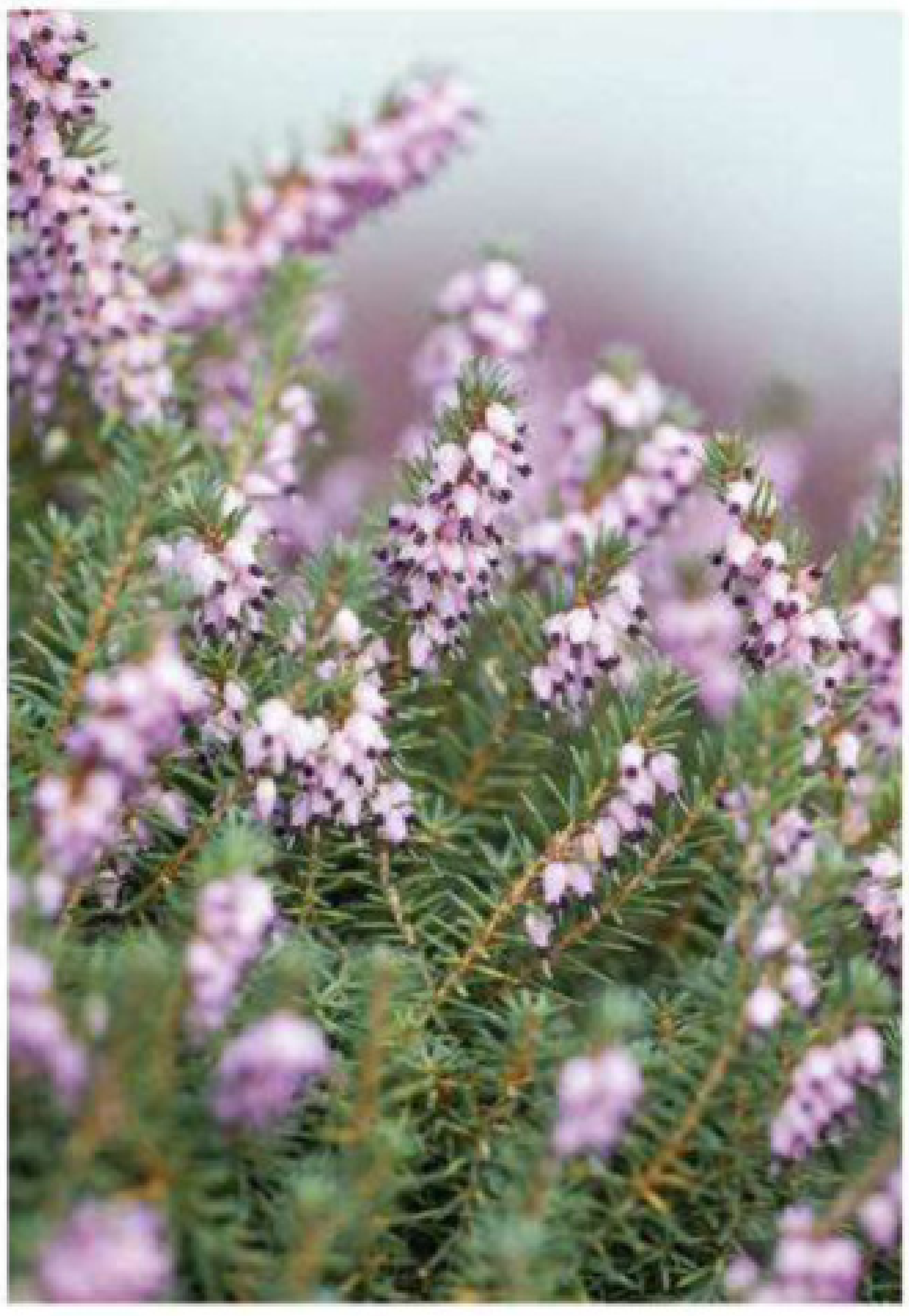
***E. X DARLEYENSIS* 'DARLEY DALE'**
A popular winter heather with profuse pale-pink flowers, darkening with age from early winter to mid spring. Mid-green foliage with cream and pink tips to the shoots in spring.
30cm x 45cm. RHS H6, USDA 6a-8b.



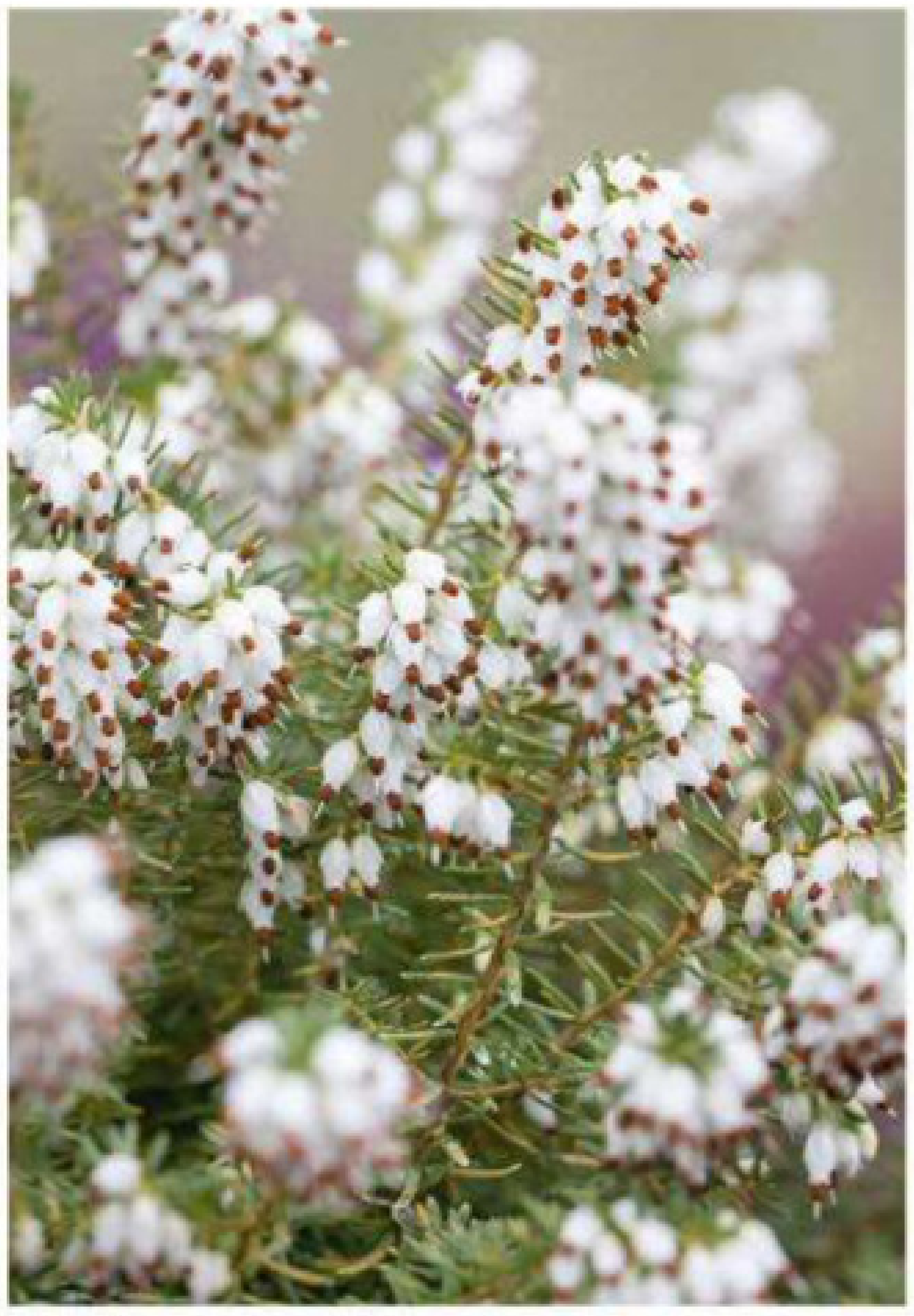
***E. X DARLEYENSIS* F. *AUREIFOLIA* 'MARY HELEN'**
Mid-pink blooms open in late winter to mid spring. The new yellow-gold foliage lasts all summer, turning bronze in winter.
20cm x 30cm. RHS H6, USDA 6a-8b.



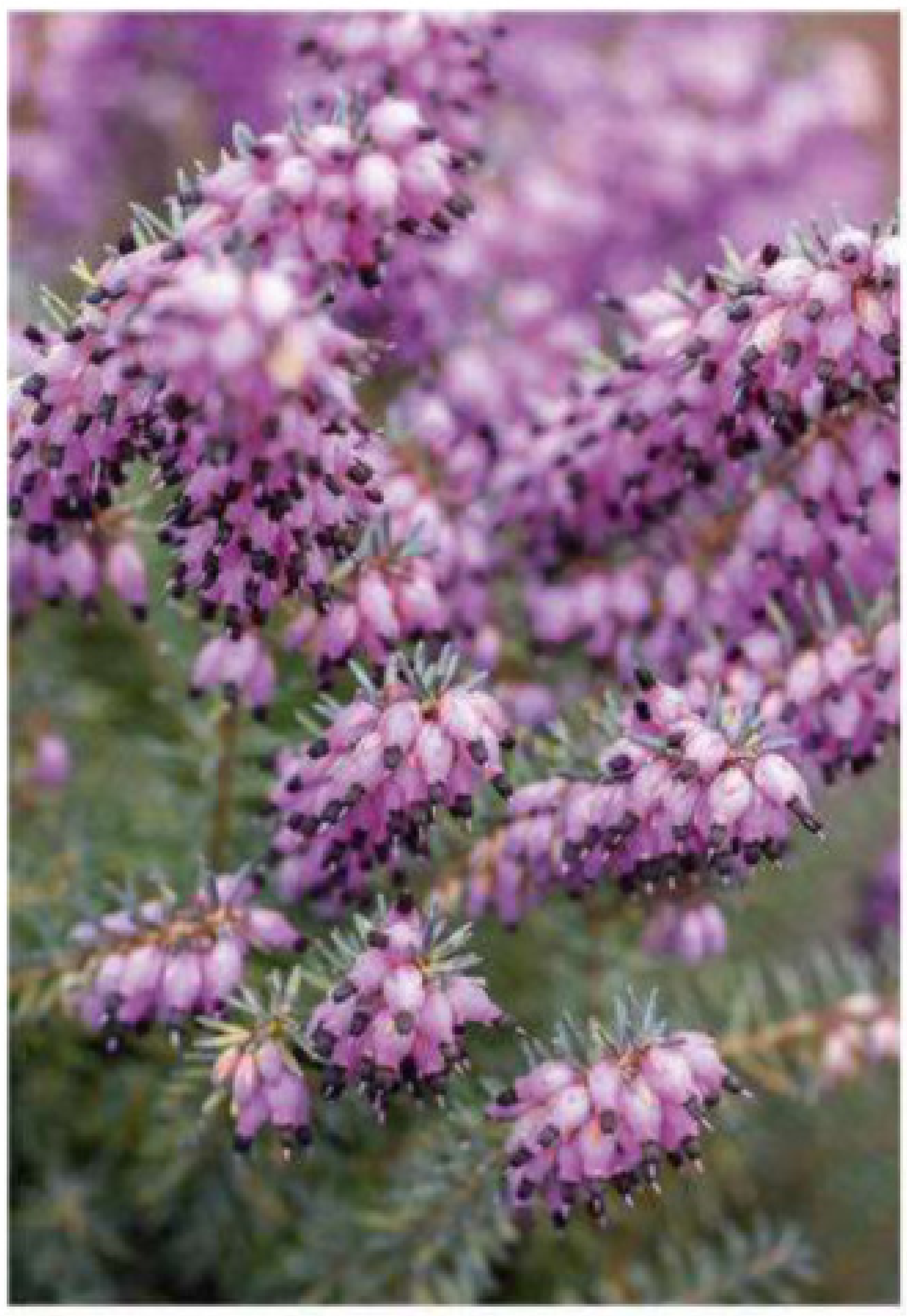
***E. X DARLEYENSIS* F. *AUREIFOLIA* 'MOONSHINE'**
A bushy heather with yellowish-green foliage that does not darken in winter. The pale-pink flowers open from early winter to mid spring.
30cm x 45cm. RHS H6, USDA 6a-8b.



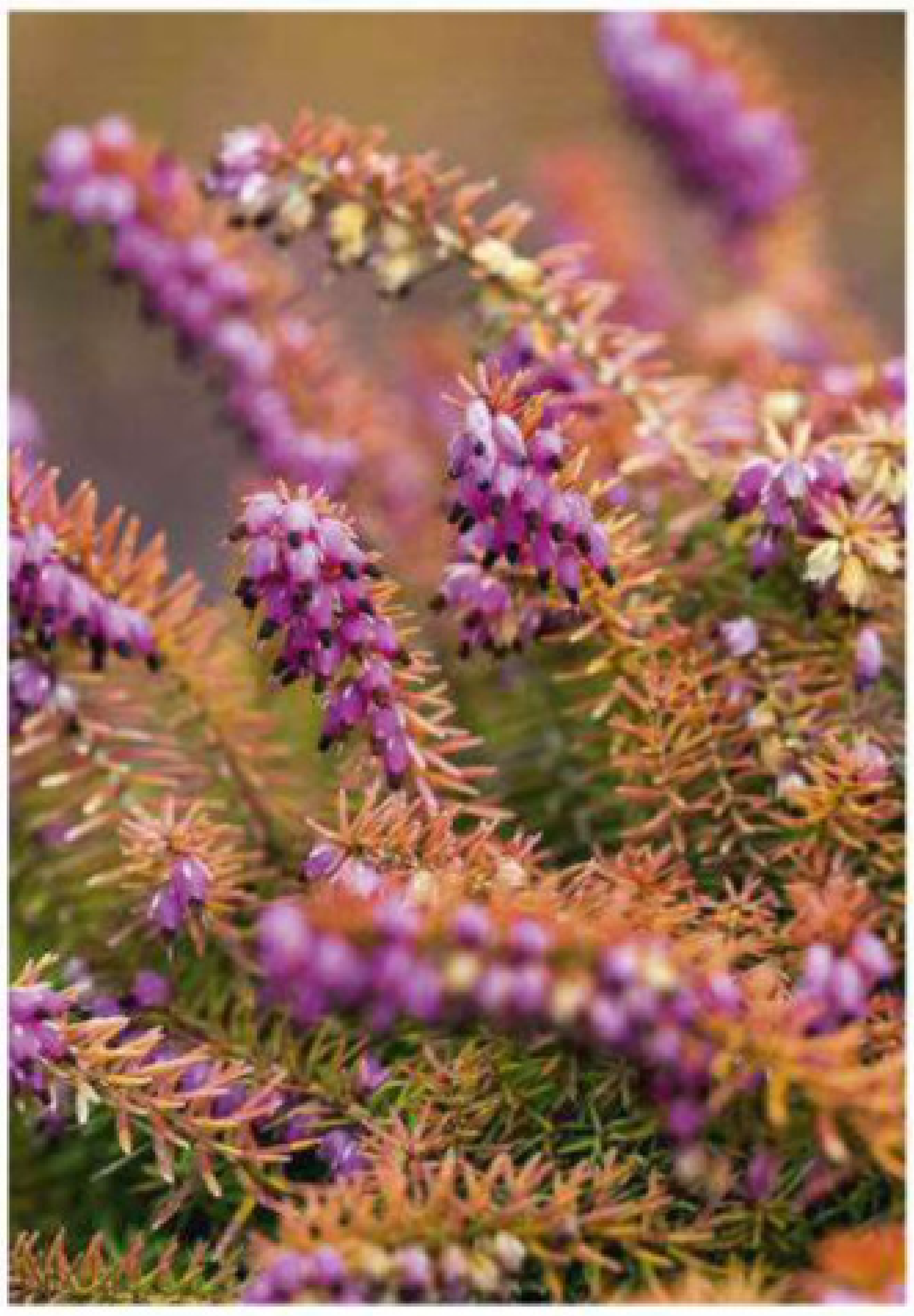
***E. X DARLEYENSIS* 'PHOEBE'**
A compact and free-flowering cultivar with profuse, rose-pink flowers from autumn to midwinter. Excellent ground cover, with dark-green foliage and a dense, bushy habit.
15cm x 20cm. RHS H6, USDA 6a-8b.



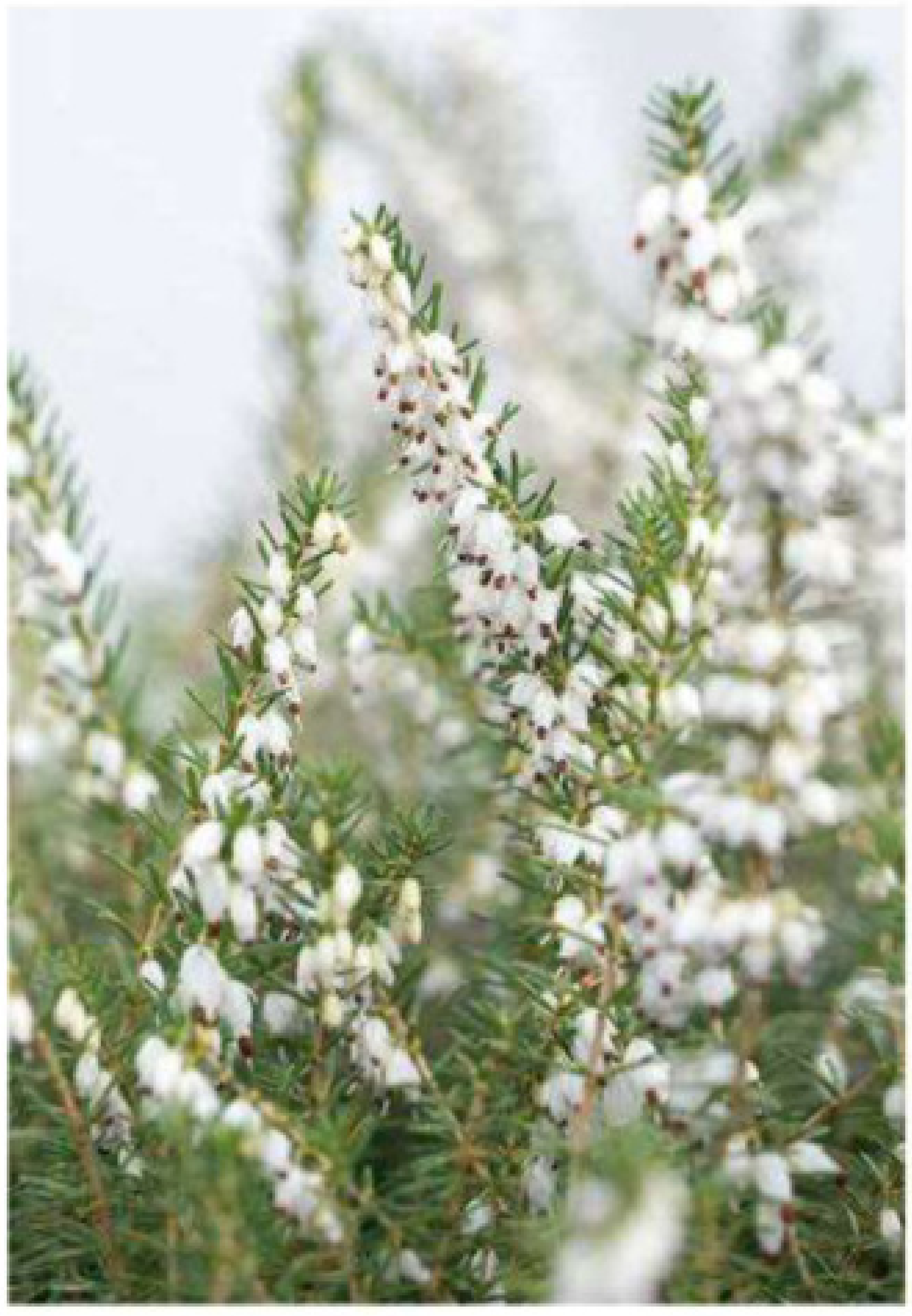
E. X *DARLEYENSIS* 'KATIA'
A bushy, compact heather with mid-green foliage, large, pure-white flowers and prominent brown stamens from early to late winter. Excellent with hellebores. 30cm x 45cm. RHS H6, USDA 6a-8b.



E. X *DARLEYENSIS* 'LUCIE'
A sport of 'Kramer's Rote', with large, showy, magenta flowers on spikes of dark-green foliage in spring. Blooms later than many cultivars, so less damaged by frost and rain. 45cm x 60cm. RHS H6, USDA 6a-8b.



E. X *DARLEYENSIS* F. *AUREIFOLIA* 'TWEETY'
A striking heather with bright, golden-yellow foliage, which turns orange in winter. The sparse, magenta flowers contrast with the foliage from early winter to mid spring. 30cm x 45cm. RHS H6, USDA 6a-8b.



E. X *DARLEYENSIS* F. *ALBIFLORA* 'WHITE PERFECTION'
Left unpruned, this heather produces long spikes of pure-white flowers with brown stamens from midwinter to mid spring. 45cm x 75cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 6a-8b.

Cultivation

Erica carnea and *Erica* x *darleyensis* are both easy to grow on any well-drained, fertile soil. They are reasonably drought-tolerant, but can suffer in prolonged hot, dry weather, especially when planted in full sun. So, although lime-tolerant, they are not ideal on shallow chalk unless plenty of organic matter is incorporated when planting. Regular watering is essential while plants are becoming established.

Heathers grown in small pots are best planted in groups of three or five, 30cm apart, where they will grow together to form larger, undulating mats. The secret of success is to trim the plants annually after flowering, cutting back to just below the flowers as they fade. This encourages new, branched growth and a bushy, compact habit. Mulching with leaf mould, compost and a light application of an ericaceous fertiliser after trimming is beneficial.

Heathers grow well in full sun and light shade and are ideal under the dappled shade of deciduous trees. In heavy shade, growth becomes drawn and flowering is poor. They are good, long-term subjects for pots and containers, especially when grown in a peat-free medium mixed with lime-free John Innes. This helps to retain moisture and nutrients. If callunas are grown permanently in pots, it is best to use a lime-free, ericaceous growing medium. Groups of winter-flowering heathers add evergreen interest and winter colour in beds and borders, and are also ideal in narrow planting spaces and alongside gravel and paving.

Good planting partners

With their tiny, needle-like leaves, fine stems and bristling texture, *Erica carnea* and *Erica* x *darleyensis* are both useful subjects to contrast with broad-leaved shrubs and perennials. Use their winter flowers to extend the season of interest and as a long-lasting aspect of a colour combination. A white-flowered cultivar, such as *E. carnea* f. *alba* 'Isabell' (page 66), is perfect with the small, green-and-white variegated leaves of *Euonymus japonicus*

'Microphyllus Albovariegatus'. Add a few snowdrops or white narcissi and white-flowered *Cyclamen hederifolium*, and you have a delightful partnership for semi-shade in a small garden.

The ruby flowers and dark foliage of *Erica carnea* 'December Red' (page 67) are striking with the addition of the strappy black leaves of *Ophiopogon planiscapus* 'Nigrescens' and sugar-pink *Cyclamen coum*. Add *Hebe* 'Frozen Flame', and the foliage turns from shades of grey to purple-pink as the weather turns colder.

On acid soil, winter-flowering heathers work well with the leathery leaves of dwarf *Rhododendron* and shining whorls of *Pieris* foliage. They also make excellent ground cover in semi-shade with *Leucothoe*, a short evergreen shrub with leaves that colour richly in winter. Try *Erica* x *darleyensis* 'Arthur Johnson' (page 68) with *Leucothoe keiskei* 'Royal Ruby' and dark-flowered *Helleborus* x *hybridus* in shade that is not too dry.

Where to see

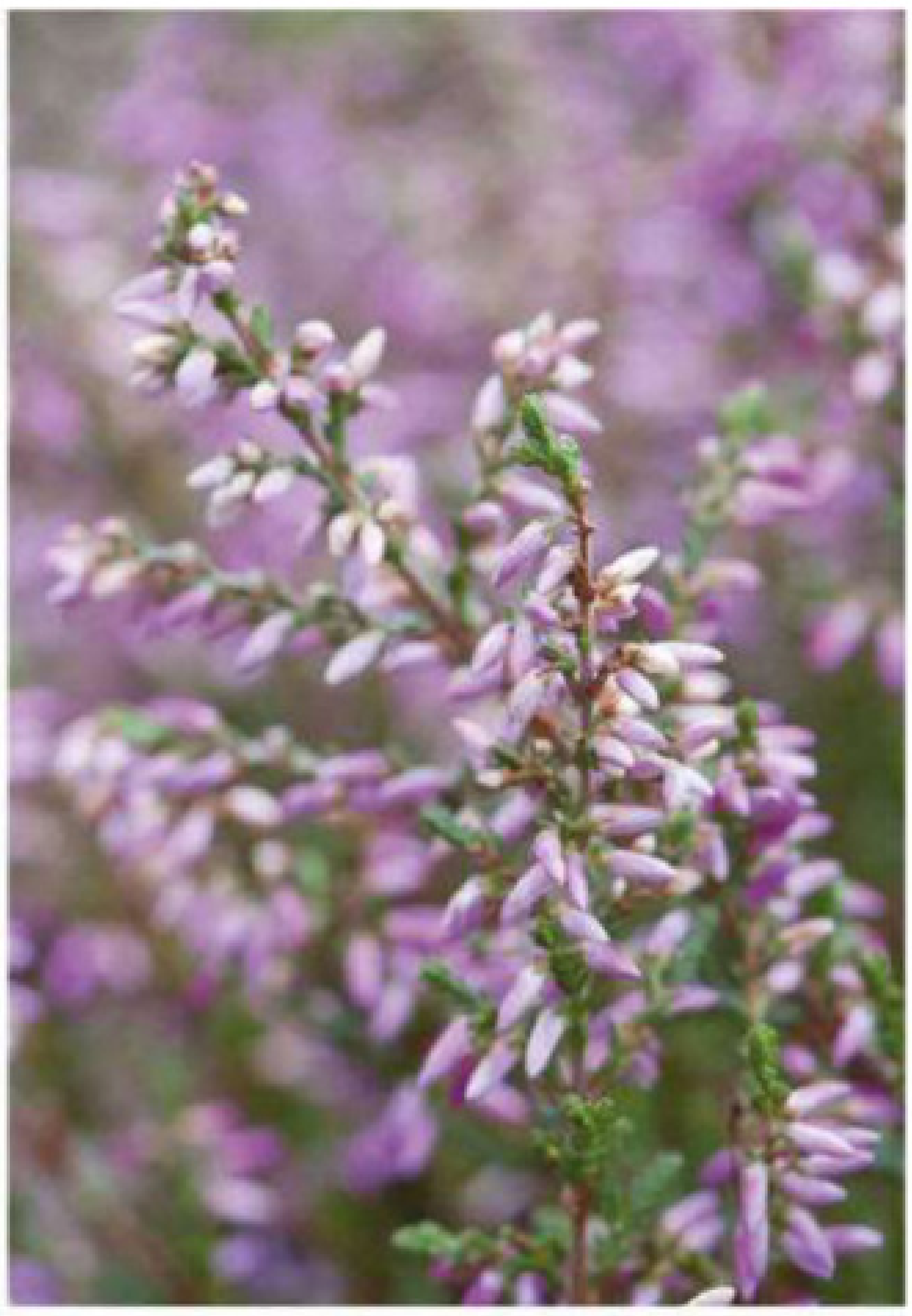
- **Holehird Gardens**
  Patterdale Road, Windermere,
  Cumbria LA23 1NP.
  Tel 015394 46008,
  holehirdgardens.org.uk
- **Nymans**
  Staplefield Lane, Handcross,
  West Sussex RH17 6EB.
  Tel 01444 405250,
  nationaltrust.org.uk/nymans
- **RHS Garden Wisley**
  Wisley, Woking, Surrey GU23 6QB.
  Tel 0845 260 9000,
  rhs.org.uk

Where to buy

- **The Heather Garden**
  Woodlands, Wimborne,
  Dorset BH21 8LJ.
  Tel 01202 824387,
  theheathergarden.co.uk

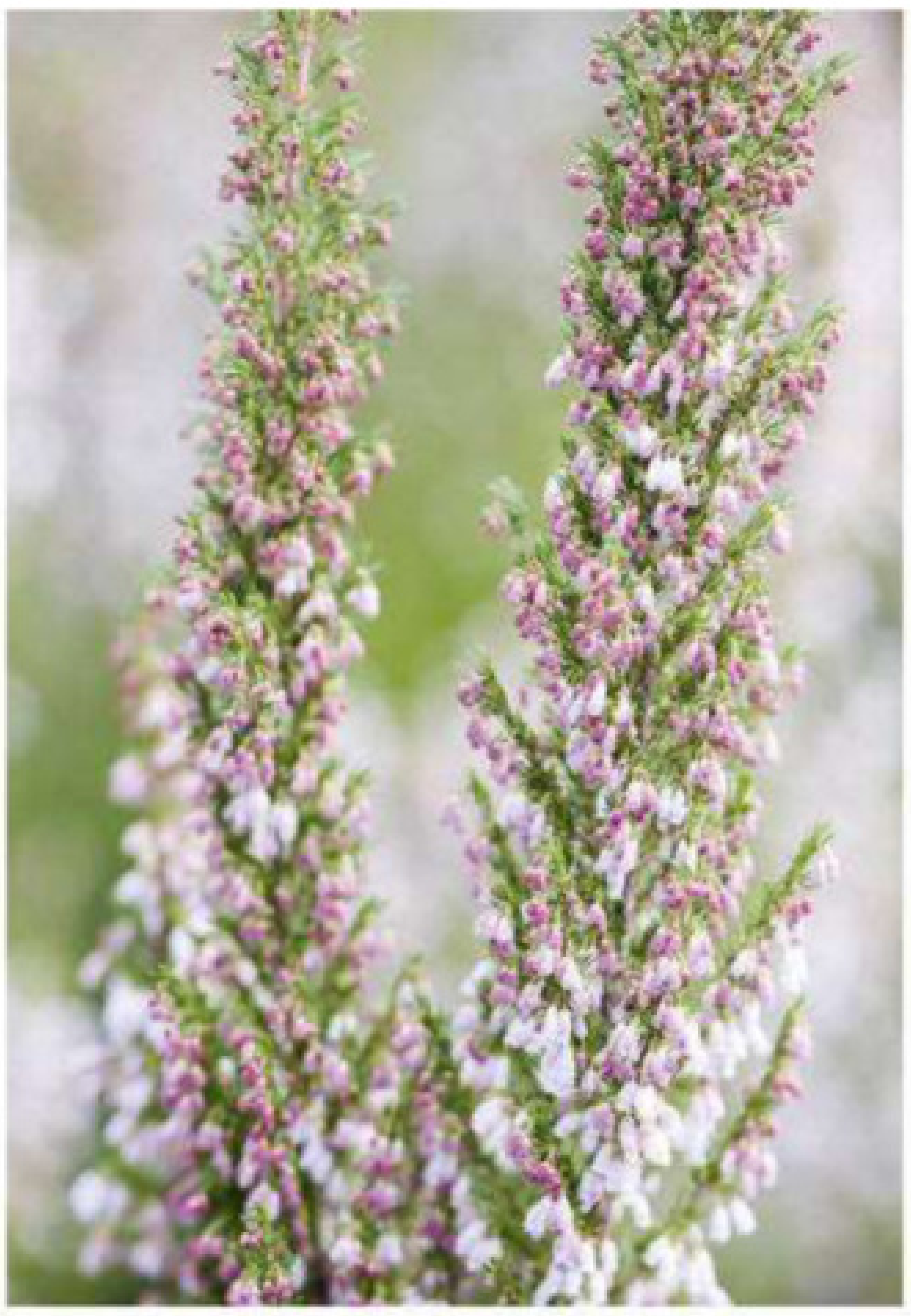
Heathers are widely available from garden centres and nurseries. The Heather Society is a good source of information for choosing and growing heathers. **heathersociety.org**

Other winter-flowering heathers

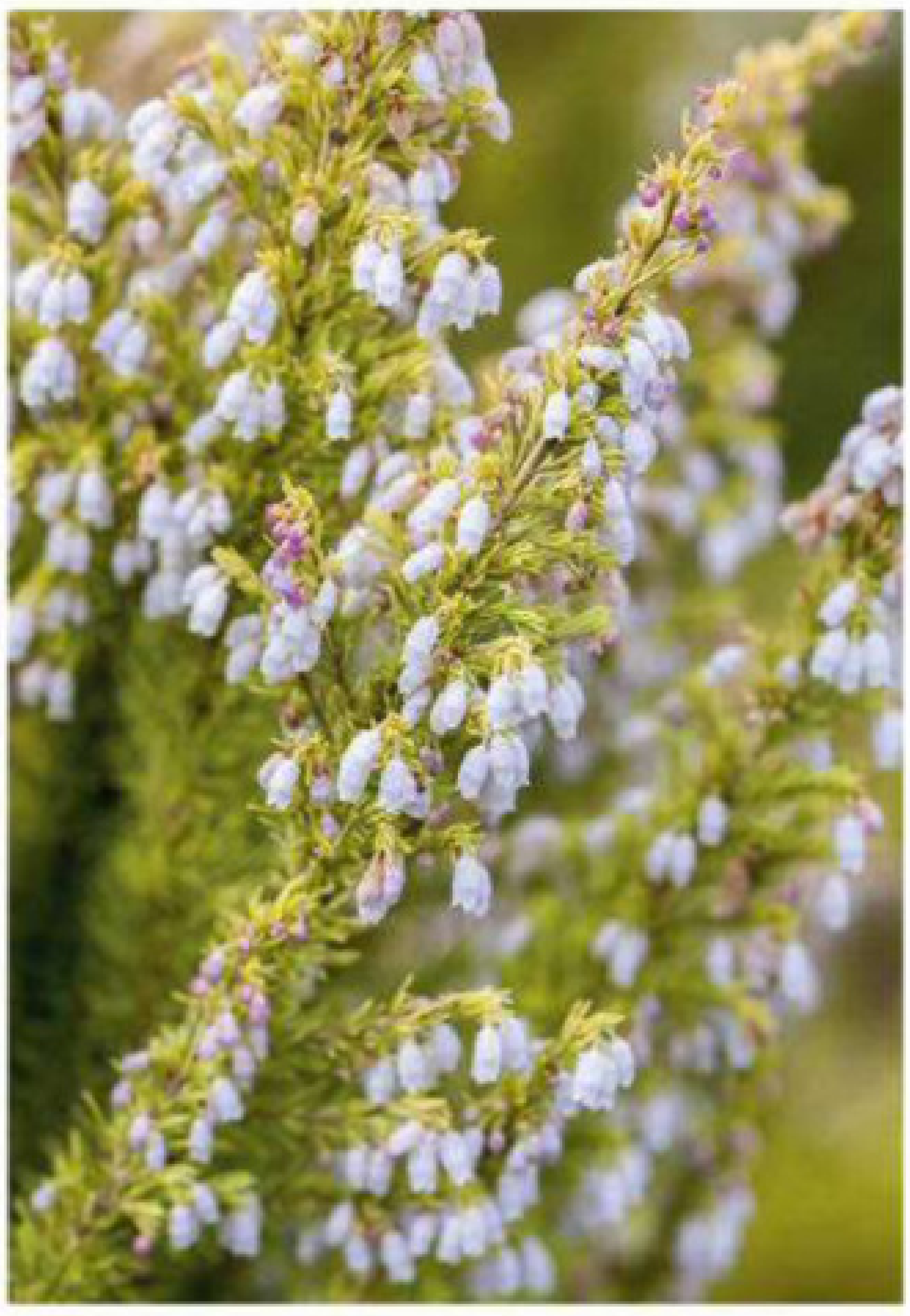


MARIANNE MAJERUS

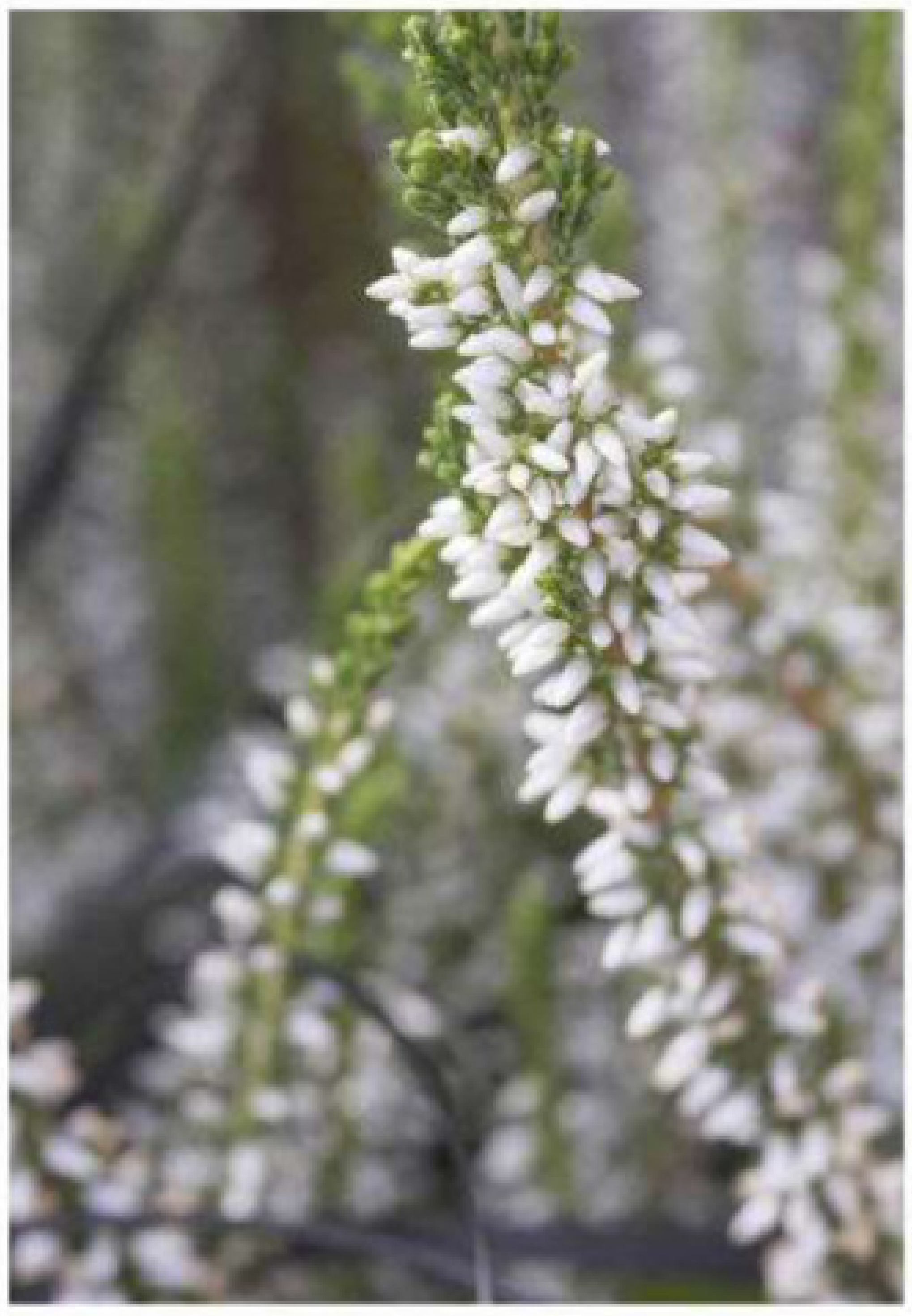
***CALLUNA VULGARIS* 'MARLIES'**
A bud-blooming heather with dark-green foliage and deep-red buds from autumn to midwinter. Broad and spreading, it is long-lasting and withstands the winter weather well. 30cm x 45cm. RHS H7, USDA 5a-9b.



E. LUSITANICA
An open, upright shrub with mid-green foliage and bead-like blooms from midwinter to late spring. The pollen-rich buds are tinged pink at first, opening white. For milder areas. 1.8m x 75cm. AGM. RHS H2, USDA 8a-10b.

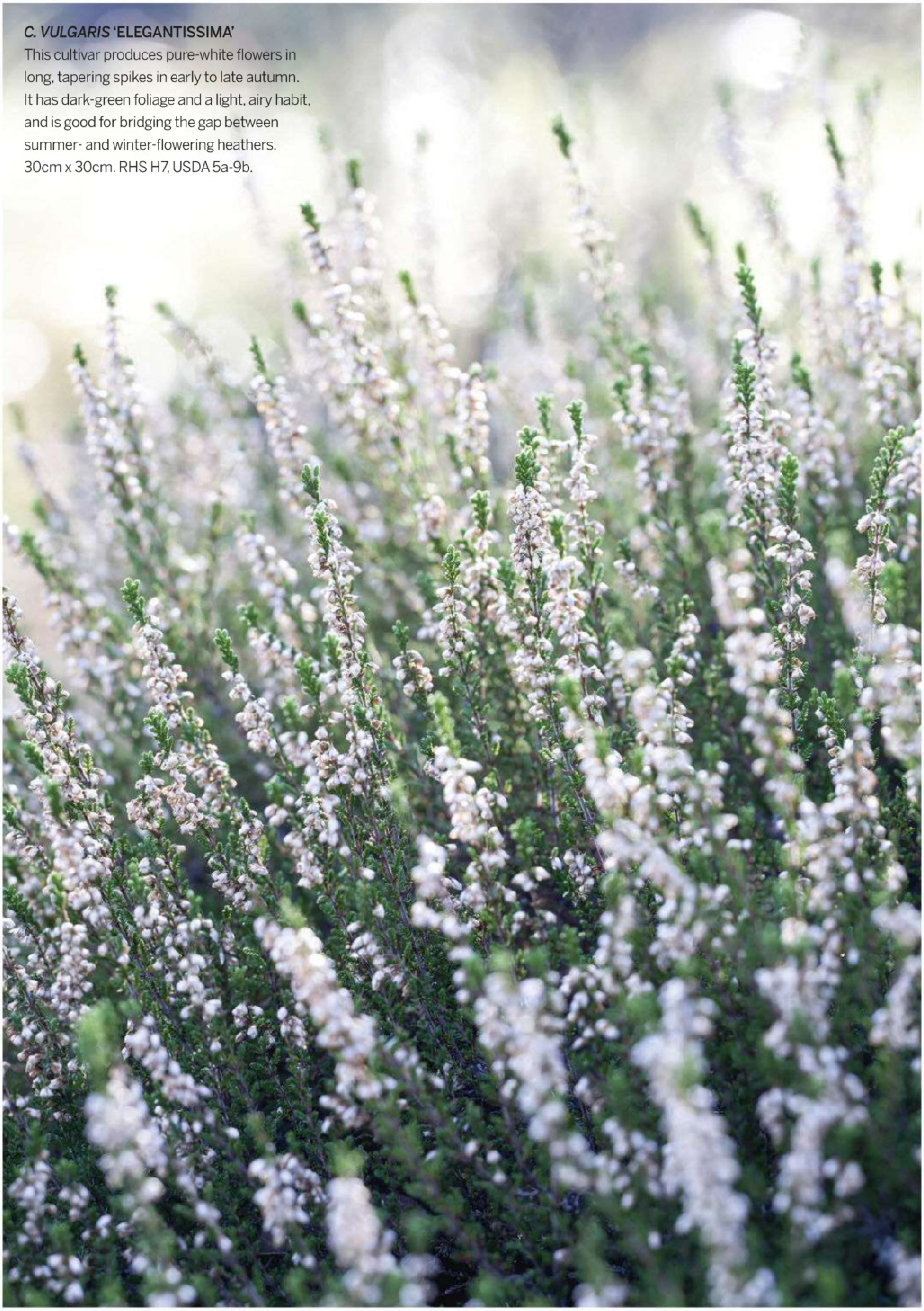


***E. LUSITANICA F. AUREIFOLIA* 'GEORGE HUNT'**
A form of Portuguese heather for milder areas. Golden-yellow foliage all year with pure-white pearly flowers from late winter to mid spring. 75cm x 60cm. RHS H2, USDA 8a-10b.



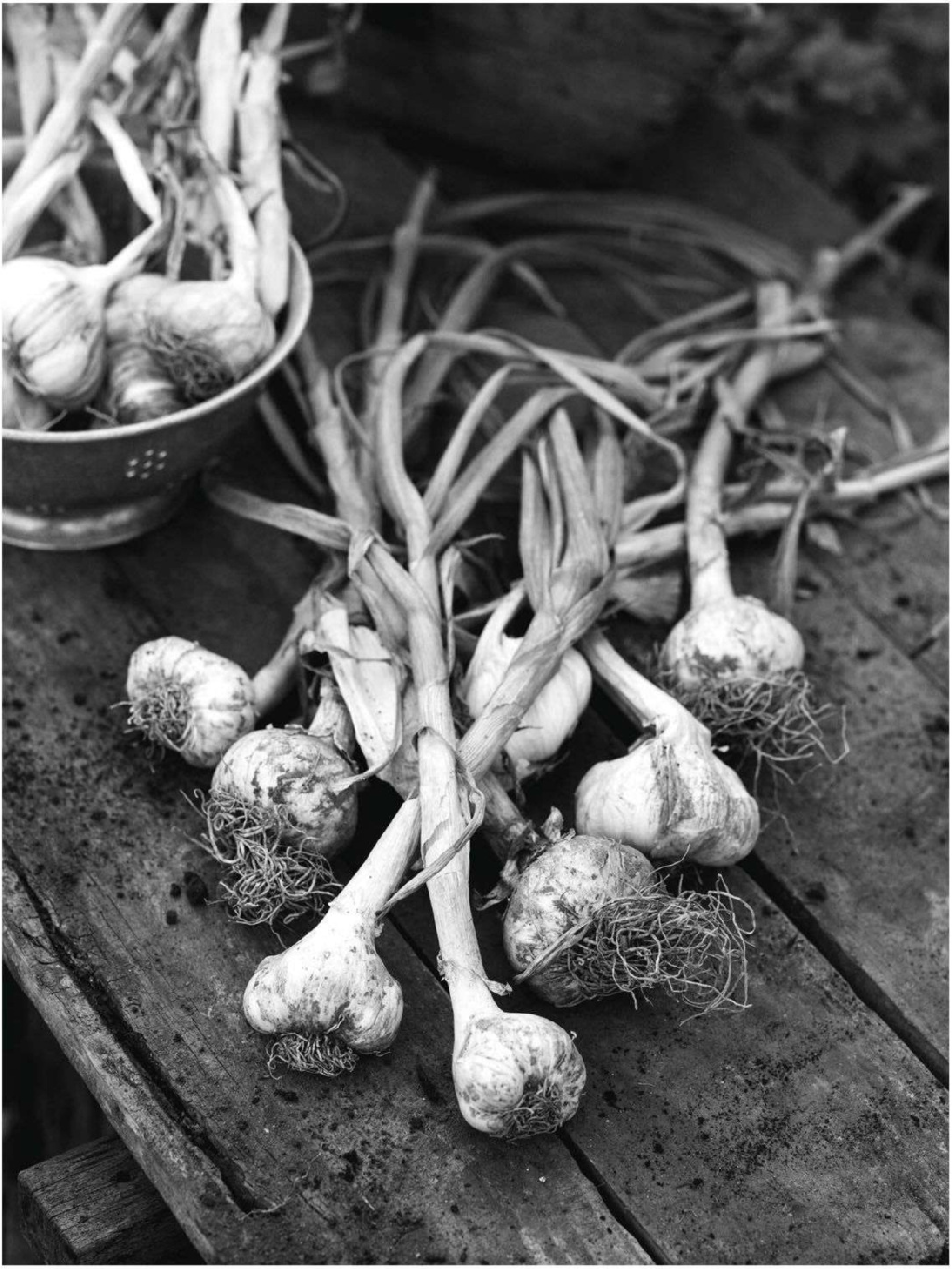
GAP PHOTOS

***C. VULGARIS* 'ALICIA'**
An excellent bud-blooming heather with tall spikes of dark-green foliage packed with pale bud blooms from autumn to early winter. Great for containers and for cutting. 30cm x 30cm. AGM. RHS H7, USDA 5a-9b.



C. *VULGARIS* 'ELEGANTISSIMA'
This cultivar produces pure-white flowers in long, tapering spikes in early to late autumn. It has dark-green foliage and a light, airy habit, and is good for bridging the gap between summer- and winter-flowering heathers. 30cm x 30cm. RHS H7, USDA 5a-9b.

MANY THANKS TO FOREST EDGE NURSERIES IN DORSET WHERE THE MAJORITY OF THESE IMAGES WERE TAKEN



Flavour of the month

Garlic is one of the healthiest ways to add flavour to food and now is the time to plant out cloves ready for harvest come summer. Allotmenteer Jojo Tulloh explains how to get started

WORDS **JOJO TULLOH** PHOTOGRAPHS **ANDREW MONTGOMERY**

> *"If you grow your own garlic you can have a bit of France, the Black Sea or Spain in your patch"*

Why grow garlic? Taste is the simple answer. The sweet, subtle flavours of a home-grown bulb will put you off acrid, long-stored shop garlic for ever. Grow garlic yourself and you can eat it at every stage, snipping the spring onion-like greens into tarts and soups in February and later on harvesting the curly green stalk-like flower buds or 'scapes' (to use like green beans or asparagus). At harvest time the baked heads of the 'wet' new garlic can be roasted whole and the dried crop eaten until Christmas and beyond. Even months after lifting, a home-grown bulb still retains its sweetness. On top of taste, garlic has long been used for centuries to fight disease and infection, and today is thought to help lower both cholesterol levels and blood pressure.

Garlic farmer Colin Boswell believes it's the range of so many individual cultivars that makes garlic growing exciting. "For the amateur grower it's the provenance of these bulbs that is their strong selling point," he says. "If you grow your own you can have a bit of France, the Black Sea or Spain in your patch. I love the Heritage hardnecks from Eastern Europe, they have big cloves, they're easy peeling and incredibly juicy."

Garlic is a straightforward crop. If you can grow a pot of narcissi you can probably manage a row of garlic. Just find a patch of sunny ground and push the cloves into a hole made with a dibber or your finger. Seed garlic supplier and market gardener Jennifer Birch advises dressing your soil with rock potash and bone meal applied at around 50g per square metre before planting. She plants her cloves 20cm apart with the soil just covering the tip of the garlic (no more than 25mm beneath the surface) in rows 20cm apart, with alternate rows planted diagonally to each other to create a herringbone pattern. In smaller gardens the spacing can be reduced to 10cm. "The garlic will push up out of the ground as it grows and should be gently pushed back in at this stage taking care not to damage the roots," she says. When you split a garlic head you also get a number of tiny elongated cloves. These Jennifer suggests should be planted together and harvested as you would spring onions.

As well as being low maintenance, garlic has another advantage: it's an over-winter crop, grown when other crops are dormant. You can sow from September to the following February to harvest from May to July. Don't wait until the green leaves have fallen over as with onions – if you do this you may find your garlic bulbs have split when you dig them up – instead poke around beneath the soil regularly to check the bulbs have not started splitting up. Otherwise it's simply a case of running a hoe down the rows to keep them weed free and watering. "The really critical months for watering are in late spring," says Colin. "If you let the plants dry out in April or May they will assess the water available and decide to make a smaller bulb."

When you're satisfied with the size of the bulbs, choose a dry, sunny day to lift and spread the bulbs out over the soil (if no rain is forecast) or under cover with ventilation. When the heads are good and dry, trim the stem down to about 6cm and cut off the roots, rub away the dirty outer layers of skin with your thumb and plait together. When the growing is done comes the delight of discovering the depth of flavours really fresh garlic will bring to your cooking. □

• Turn the page for four delicious recipes using fresh garlic

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USEFUL INFORMATION

Don't be tempted to plant cloves from a shop-bought garlic, which may be a cultivar better suited to warmer climates. Instead try **The Garlic Farm**, Mersley Lane, Newchurch, Isle of Wight PO36 0NR (Tel 01983 865378, thegarlicfarm.co.uk), which stocks many of the cultivars shown right. **Jennifer Birch**, 3 Strathmore Gardens, Sling, Coleford, Gloucestershire GL16 8JQ (Tel 01594 832190) also offers a good selection. Call or send a SAE for her latest stock list.

Good garlic to grow

Nine great garlics to plant now and harvest May to July

***Allium sativum* var. *ophioscorodon* 'Extra Early Wight'**
A large, white softneck, with a crisp, fresh flavour. Ready end of May. Has a white bulb streaked with mauve.

***A. sativum* 'Iberian Wight'**
Large, fat, white garlic with purple stripes. From southwest Spain, it is an excellent all-round garlic with large cloves perfect for Spanish dishes, especially tomatoes.

***A. sativum* var. *ophioscorodon* 'Red Duke'**
A hardneck, heritage garlic from Moravia in the Czech Republic. It has plump purple cloves and a fierce, spicy flavour.

***A. ampeloprasum* 'Elephant'**
Less intense than some cultivars, with a warm, mild flavour. Roasted whole, the large head makes for a spectacular feast.

***A. sativum* 'Solent Wight'**
A cultivar Colin Boswell of The Garlic Farm highly recommends both for its flavour and the length of time it keeps – normally around nine months.

***A. sativum* var. *ophioscorodon* 'Lautrec Wight'**
One of Jennifer Birch's favourites and considered by many to be one of the most flavoursome. Can be planted in autumn or early spring, but not good for wet conditions.

***A. sativum* 'Germidour'**
An early cropping garlic with rich purple head and ivory cloves. The reliably big heads must be checked regularly for splitting pre-harvest. AGM*.

***A. sativum* 'Thermidrôme'**
Traditional cultivar producing large white heads and cloves. Plant October to November for a July harvest, but use by Christmas after cropping.

***A. sativum* 'Arno'**
With a white head and pink cloves, this new cultivar has the largest bulbs of any long-dormancy type. Will string or plait easily and keeps well. AGM.

READER OFFER

Save 15 per cent when you buy either the Garlic Farmer's Pack or the Garlic Grower's Pack from The Garlic Farm, Isle of Wight. See page 107 for details.

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*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.

Storemags com

Skordalia

SERVES 4 AS A SIDE DISH OR STARTER

- **1 large floury potato (King Edward or similar)**
- **3-4 cloves garlic (peeled and pounded to a smooth paste)**
- **1tbsp beaten egg**
- **75ml olive oil**

This Greek dish is a heartier version of the mayonnaise-type sauce aioli that is often used throughout the Mediterranean to accompany salt cod or seafood. In Greece skordalia is commonly served with sliced, battered and fried courgettes but also accompanies boiled green beans and other vegetables. It is also delicious eaten with bread and olives for a simple picnic lunch.

Scrub the potato and cut in half. Boil in salted water until soft. When cool enough to handle peel off the skin. Purée the potato (with fork, masher or ricer – but not food processor, which will make it gluey). Add the garlic and egg and beat together well. Add the olive oil a little at a time. Season with salt and pepper. Serve in small dishes and eat with fresh crusty bread or crudités. For a more luxurious skordalia, try adding 2 tablespoons of ground almonds to the potato purée.

Sautéed squid with garlic and parsley

SERVES 2 (OR 4 AS A STARTER)

- **2 squid (400-500g)**
- **3tbsp parsley**
- **3 cloves garlic**
- **2tsp olive oil**

Squid must be very carefully cooked if it is not to become tough. Everything happens very quickly in this recipe so be sure to prepare the persillade (parsley and garlic mix) before you start to cook the squid.

For the persillade chop the parsley and the garlic roughly and then chop both together until fine. Put to one side then clean the squid by removing the beak and ink sac (you can ask your fishmonger to do this for you). You don't need to take off the pink membrane (you lose flavour doing so). Cut the cleaned squid into pieces, roughly 8cm square, and put into a heavy pan over a high heat. Shake and as soon as the liquid released reaches a boil remove the squid and place in a sieve over a bowl. Reduce the liquid in the pan to a syrup and reserve.

Take a separate heavy frying pan and heat the olive oil on a high heat, add the squid, shake the pan and cook rapidly for only 30 seconds. Add the persillade, toss, and when you can smell the fried parsley add the reserved squid juices. Toss again and serve.

Chicken with 40 cloves of garlic

SERVES 4

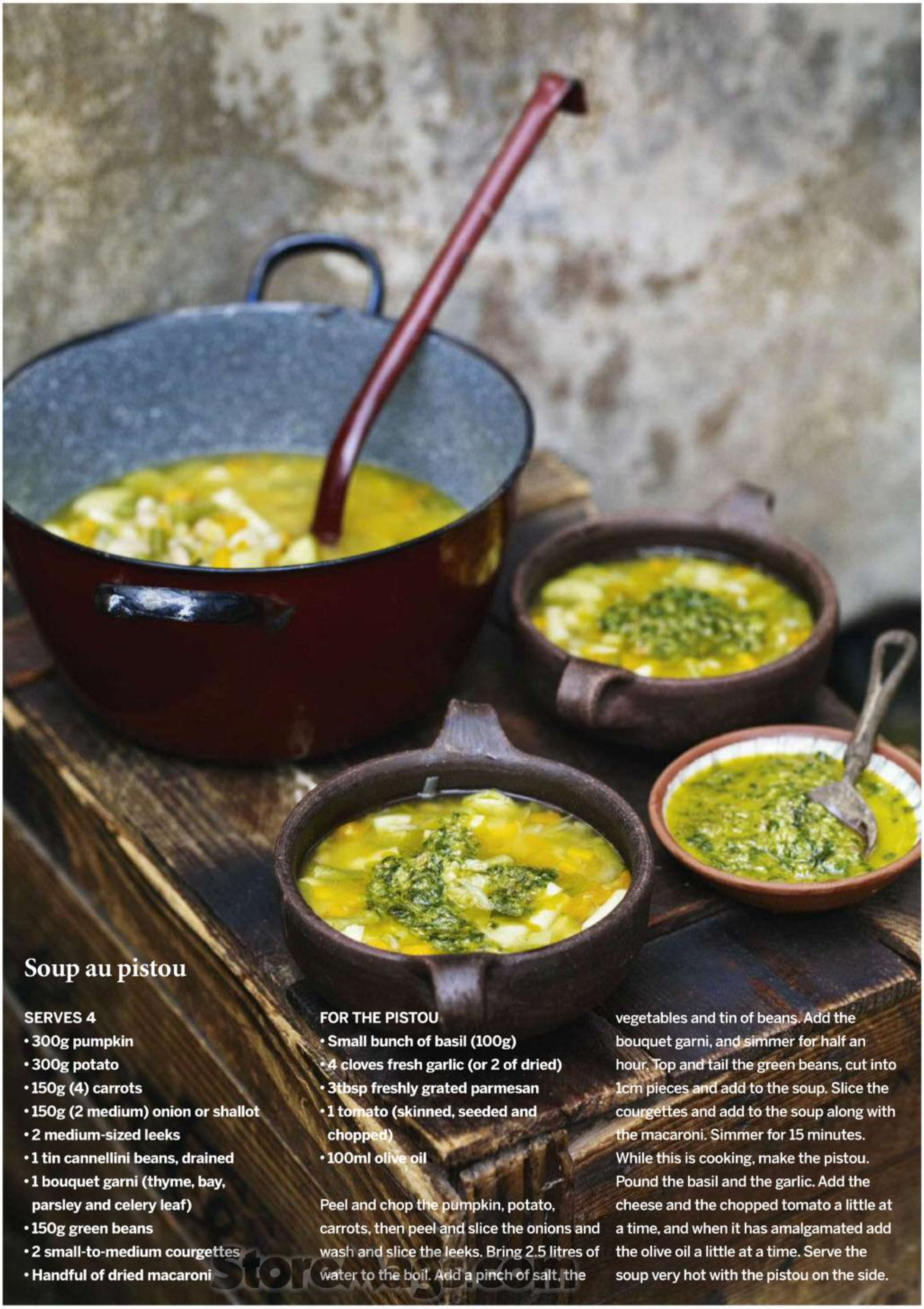
- **1 free range chicken (1.5-2kg)**
- **4 garlic heads**
- **150ml olive oil**
- **Salt and pepper**
- **1tsp dried herbs**
- **1 bouquet garni (celery, bay, lovage, leek or onion greens)**
- **4 sprigs tarragon to garnish**

FOR THE PASTE SEAL

- **200g plain flour**
- **3tbsp water**
- **1tbsp olive oil**

Cut the chicken into six to eight pieces (or ask your butcher to joint it for you). Preheat the oven to 180°C, Gas 4. In a casserole mix the chicken, oil, garlic, herbs and seasoning with your hands to make sure it is all evenly coated. Pack the garlic cloves into the spaces between the meat and push the bouquet garni down into the middle. Mix the flour, water and oil into a paste, and roll it out into a long sausage. Wet the edge of the casserole and place the dough sausage along the rim. Push the casserole lid on to the paste to make a seal. Cook for 1½ hours. Break the seal at the table, garnish with tarragon and have plenty of bread to hand on which to squeeze out the garlic cloves.

- For more recipes visit **gardensillustrated.com**



Soup au pistou

SERVES 4

- **300g pumpkin**
- **300g potato**
- **150g (4) carrots**
- **150g (2 medium) onion or shallot**
- **2 medium-sized leeks**
- **1 tin cannellini beans, drained**
- **1 bouquet garni (thyme, bay, parsley and celery leaf)**
- **150g green beans**
- **2 small-to-medium courgettes**
- **Handful of dried macaroni**

FOR THE PISTOU

- **Small bunch of basil (100g)**
- **4 cloves fresh garlic (or 2 of dried)**
- **3tbsp freshly grated parmesan**
- **1 tomato (skinned, seeded and chopped)**
- **100ml olive oil**

Peel and chop the pumpkin, potato, carrots, then peel and slice the onions and wash and slice the leeks. Bring 2.5 litres of water to the boil. Add a pinch of salt, the vegetables and tin of beans. Add the bouquet garni, and simmer for half an hour. Top and tail the green beans, cut into 1cm pieces and add to the soup. Slice the courgettes and add to the soup along with the macaroni. Simmer for 15 minutes. While this is cooking, make the pistou. Pound the basil and the garlic. Add the cheese and the chopped tomato a little at a time, and when it has amalgamated add the olive oil a little at a time. Serve the soup very hot with the pistou on the side.

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This page Sunlight filters through the leaves of *Nyssa sylvatica* and *Toona sinensis* 'Flamingo', highlighting the beauty of their colours and forms.

Opposite Visitors are encouraged to explore the beds near the back of the nursery.

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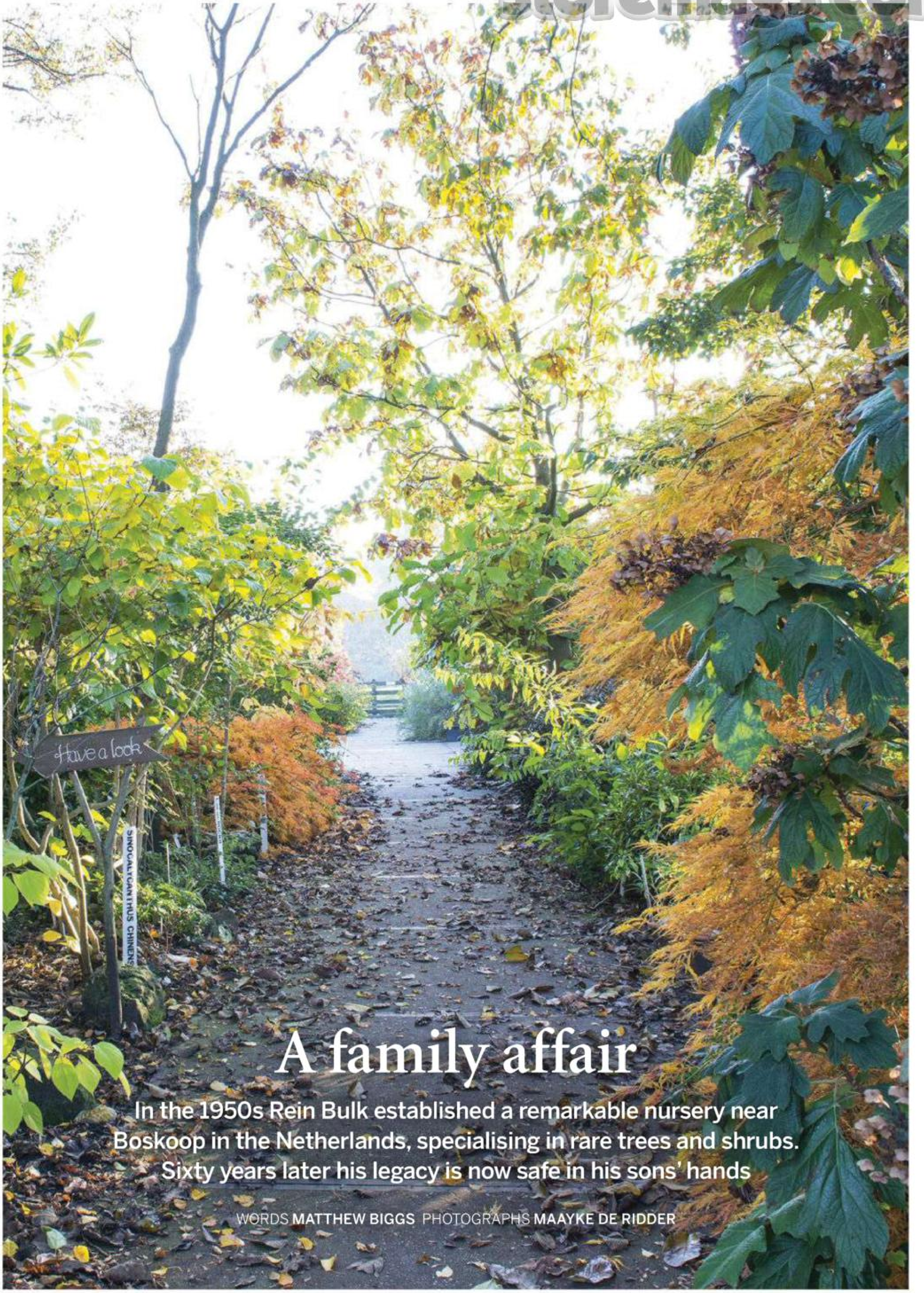

Have a look
SINOCALYCANTHUS CHINENS

A family affair

In the 1950s Rein Bulk established a remarkable nursery near Boskoop in the Netherlands, specialising in rare trees and shrubs. Sixty years later his legacy is now safe in his sons' hands

WORDS **MATTHEW BIGGS** PHOTOGRAPHS **MAAYKE DE RIDDER**

> *“We love autumn colour in leaf and stem and have gathered a collection of trophy plants from different genera, that seem to perform better each passing year”*

In early autumn 1958, 25-year-old Rein Bulk and three friends began double digging the three acres of land near Boskoop in the Netherlands that would become Bulk Nursery – it took them about a year. From such humble beginnings, a renowned specialist nursery was born.

Rein began growing shrubs from hardwood cuttings or layering to give relatively rapid results, until one day, he realised there was more value in rare and desirable woody plants than in standard perennials for the same amount of work. “I told friends in the Netherlands,” he says, “who began donating cutting material, then I bought five or ten rare plants for propagation; it all started from there.”

Today it is Rein’s son Mark – helped by his partner Anne and his brother, Rein junior – who owns and runs the nursery although Rein senior still helps out. “Every day I whistle on my way to work,” he says. “I like to do everything and work by myself, my friends are the plants.”

For Mark and his brother life has always revolved around plants. “We lived on the nursery,” says Mark. “And were, as we say in Holland, ‘fed with the spoon’. For many years, holidays were spent in Wiltshire, and we were regular visitors to Westonbirt and Bowood House. My father built up excellent contacts in nurseries, botanic gardens and specialist collections, who would then take us to see their friends and we all swapped plants and cutting material.”

The people who swap cuttings are also Mark’s customers. There is a constant stream of orders from botanical gardens in Germany, Hungary, Sweden, Belgium and Estonia and private collectors from around Europe are regular visitors. “Of around 2,500 plants on our stock list, 250 are ‘specials’ for garden centres, but once we notice that other nurseries are starting to supply them, we replace them with something else,” says Mark. “*Salix gracilistyla* ‘Mount Aso’ with its pink catkins, is a recent example.”

Mother plants for propagation line one side of the main path with stock beds opposite.

At the far end of this tidy, well-organised nursery – beyond the row upon row of must-have plants, all clearly marked with large black and white labels, the newly planted avenue of *Meliosma veitchiorum*, notable for its flowers and flaming autumn colour and a dense forest of desirable ‘mother plants’ for cuttings – lies another surprise. Piet Oudolf, a family friend, who buys from the nursery, has designed a small garden. He and Mark were discussing what could be done with what was a small football pitch, when Piet kindly volunteered to create a design. “It is tiny compared to his usual projects,” says Mark. “Piet asked us which woody plants we would like to include, so we gave him a list of 50, including *Acer triflorum*, a columnar tree with spectacular autumn colour and others he uses regularly. There is always something of interest, particularly in August and September. The garden is very young but already welcoming, colourful and beautiful.”

The family agrees that the nursery is at its best in autumn. “We love autumn colour in leaf and stem and have gathered a collection of trophy plants from different genera, that seem to perform better each passing year,” says Mark. “Even though we stock many rarities, there are still many plants I would like to grow, particularly *Stewartia malacodendron* and *Elliottia racemosa*, a beautiful but challenging North American native. It would be wonderful to share more treasures like that with our plant-loving friends.” □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Address Boomkwekerij Rein en Mark Bulk, Rijneveld 115, 2771 XV Boskoop, the Netherlands.
Tel +31 (0)172 212005.
Website bulk-boskoop.nl
Open Thursday – Friday, 9am-5pm. Saturdays 9am-1pm.

Turn the page for 12 of the family’s favourite plants ▷

Storemags.com

1

2

3

1 Plants growing in the main side of the 'mother plant' area are clearly labelled for ease of identification by staff and visitors.

2 In early autumn pots are laid on their side to prevent their roots getting too wet over winter.

3 This canal, known locally as a ditch or *sloot*, is typical of the Boskoop area. At one time it was used both for irrigation and to transport plants between different parts of the nursery.

4 With a steady hand, born of experience, Rein Bulk senior hoes methodically and carefully between rows of young plants.

5 Rooted cuttings of *Corylopsis* in the greenhouse are among the first to show their autumn colour.

6 The variety of leaf colour found on stock beds to the east side of the nursery shows why autumn is the family's favourite season.

4

5

6

12 favourite plants for autumn

Mark Bulk (left), his brother Rein junior and Mark's partner Anne Brylla (with Jack the dog) choose their favourite plants for autumn colour.

1 *Neoshirakia japonica*
This small and hardy tree or shrub is easy to grow. Its leaves, which turn a fabulous crimson colour, make it one of the finest plants for autumn foliage. Happy in sun or part shade on moist soil. 8m.

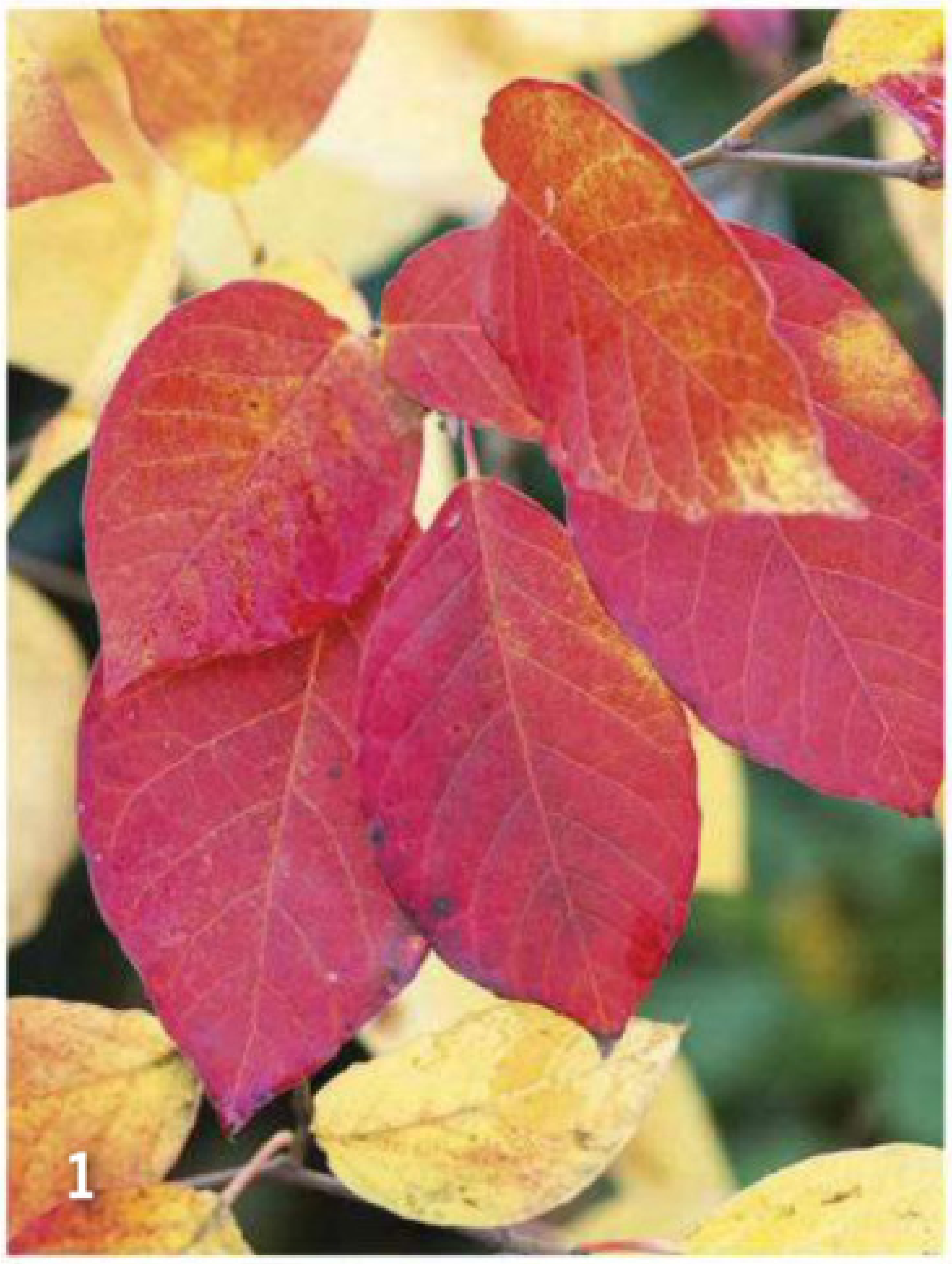
2 *Indigofera pendula*
A vigorous, elegant and upright shrub with slender arching branches, dainty blueish foliage and long spikes of delicate, dusky purple, pendulous flower spikes in late summer and autumn. It prefers full sun, shelter from strong winds and fertile, free-draining soil. 1.5m.

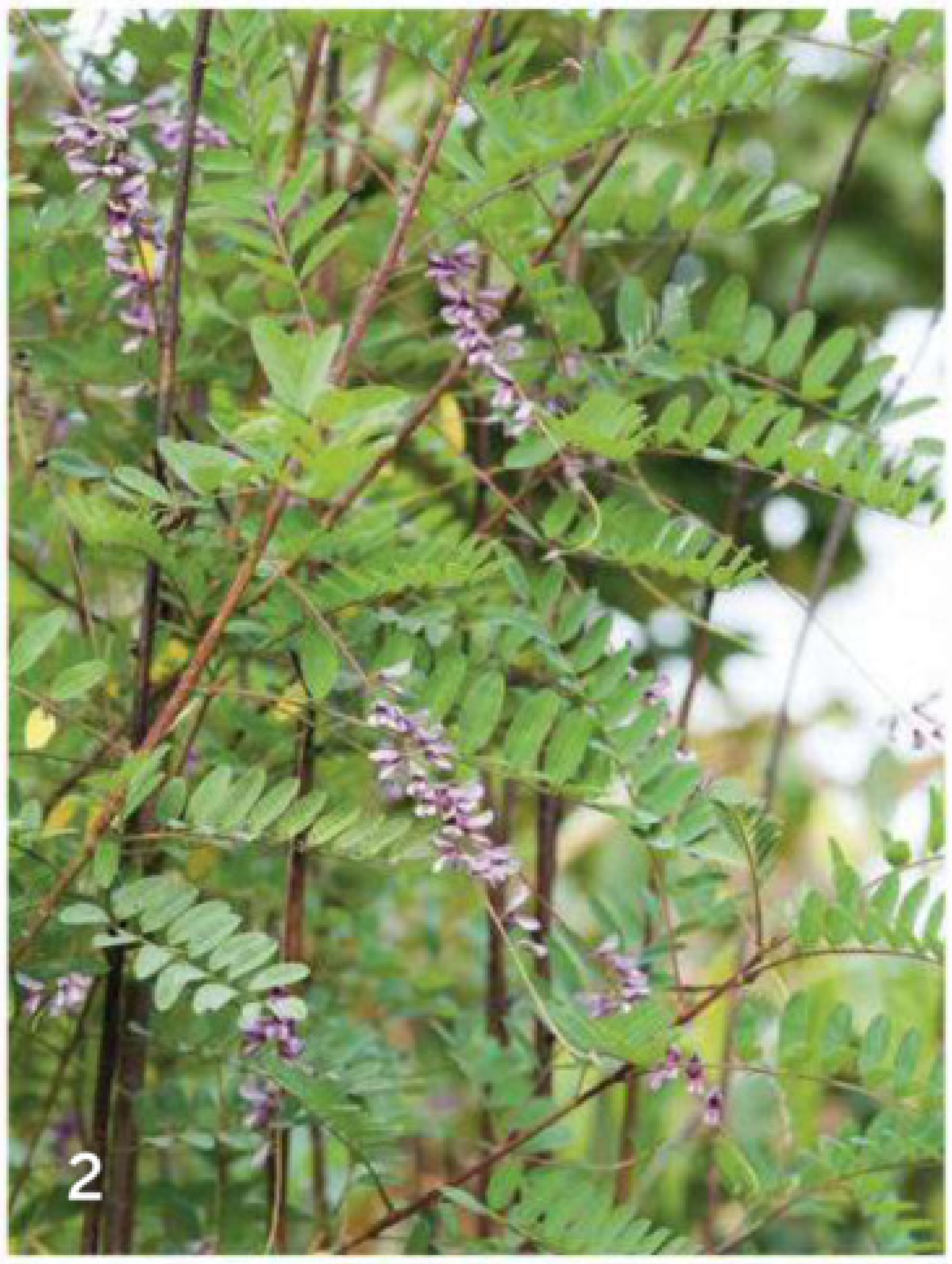
3 *Viburnum nudum* Brandywine (= 'Bulk')
More prolific in flower and fruit than the species, with burgundy autumn colour. Fruits are intense pink ripening to dark purple. It is a very hardy plant and responds well to pruning. 1.8m. USDA 5a-9b†.

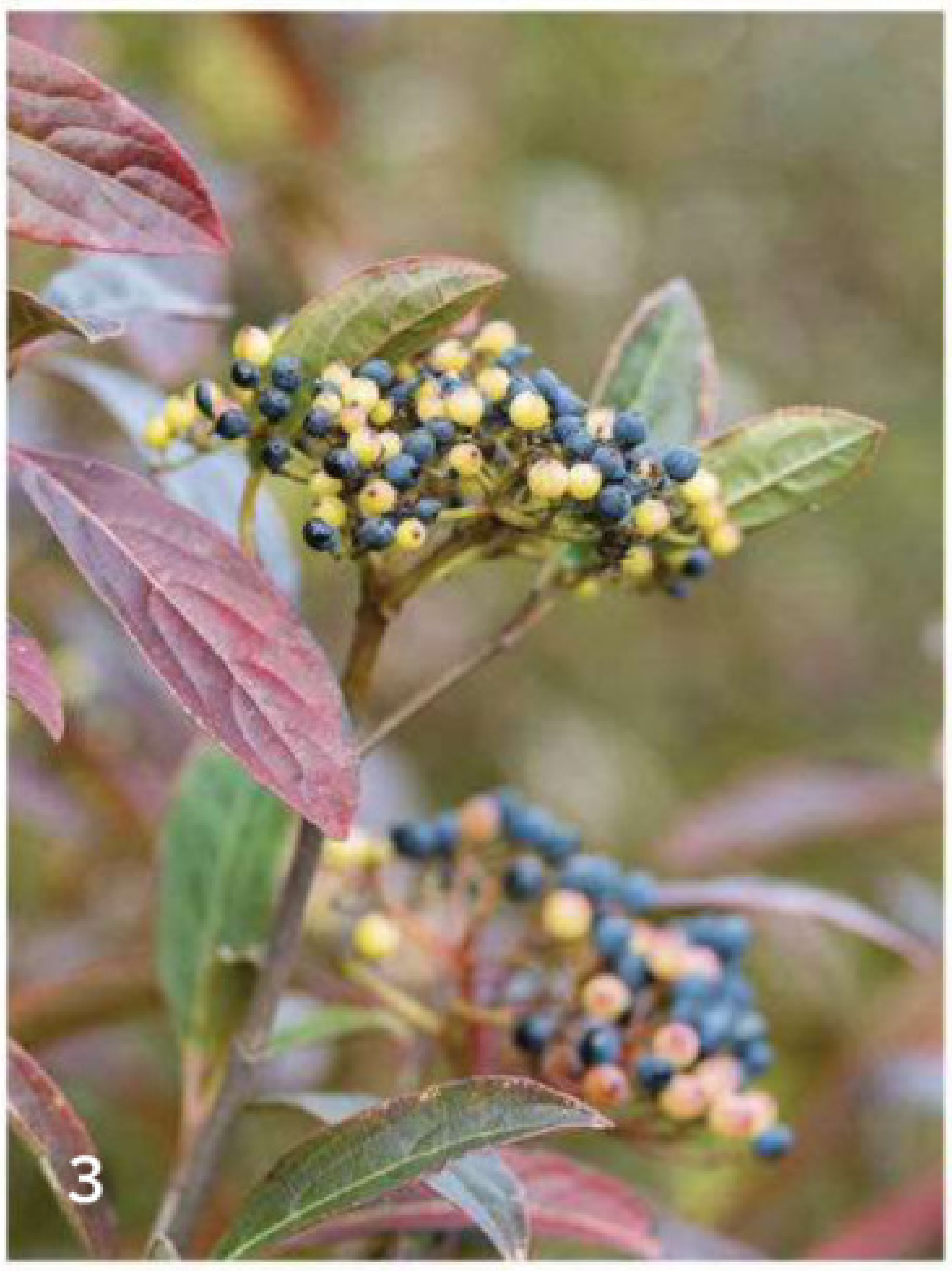
4 *Sassafras albidum*
An attractive shrub or small tree that has three different types of leaves – entire or bi- or tri-lobed – all of which turn vivid yellow, orange and purple in autumn. Needs shelter and moist soil. 25m.

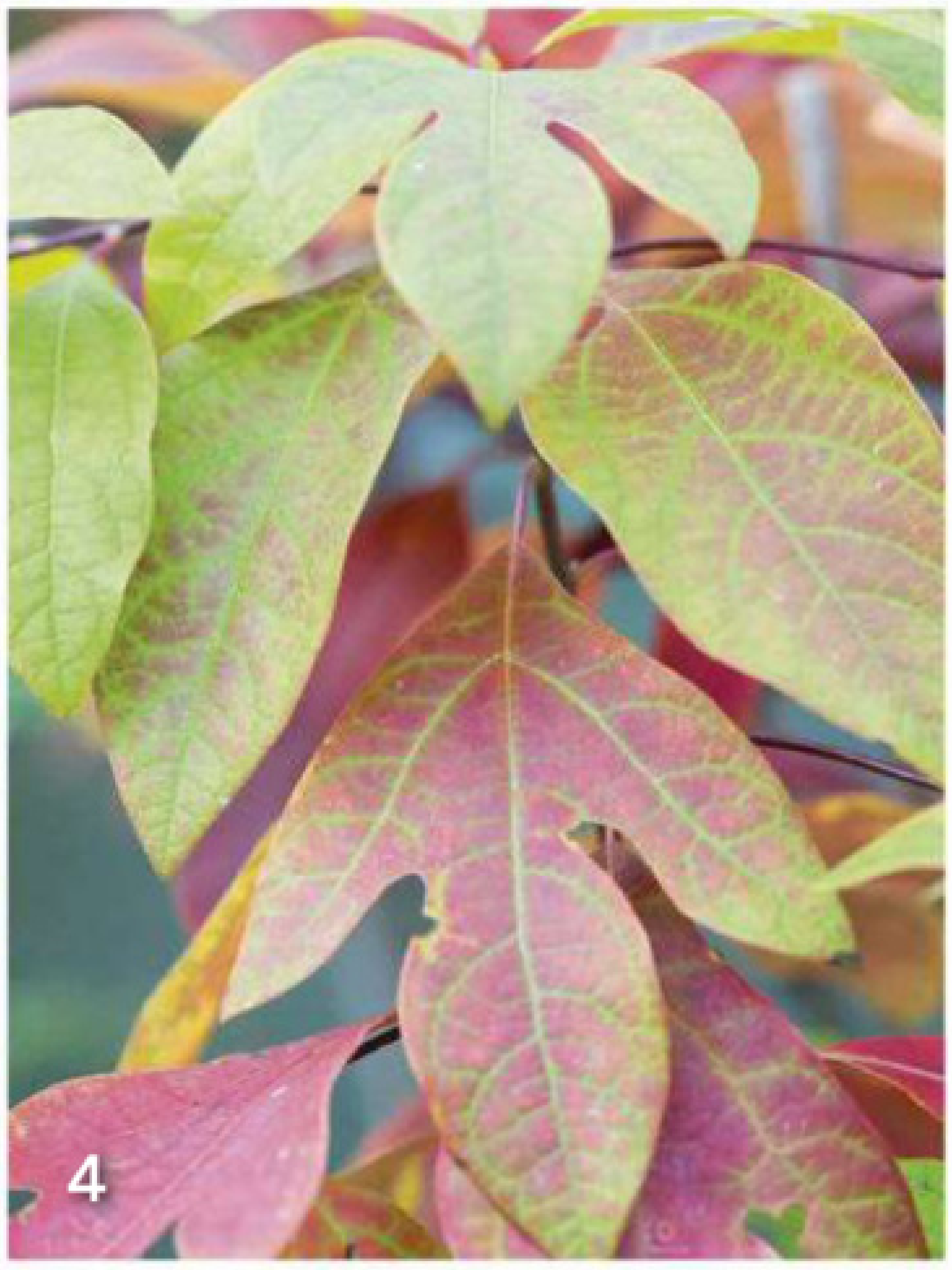
5 *Stewartia monadelpha*
A small tree, with attractive flaking bark, rich autumn colour and long lasting pretty, single, white flowers from mid to late summer. It thrives in moist, semi-shade. 9m. RHS H5, USDA6a-8b.

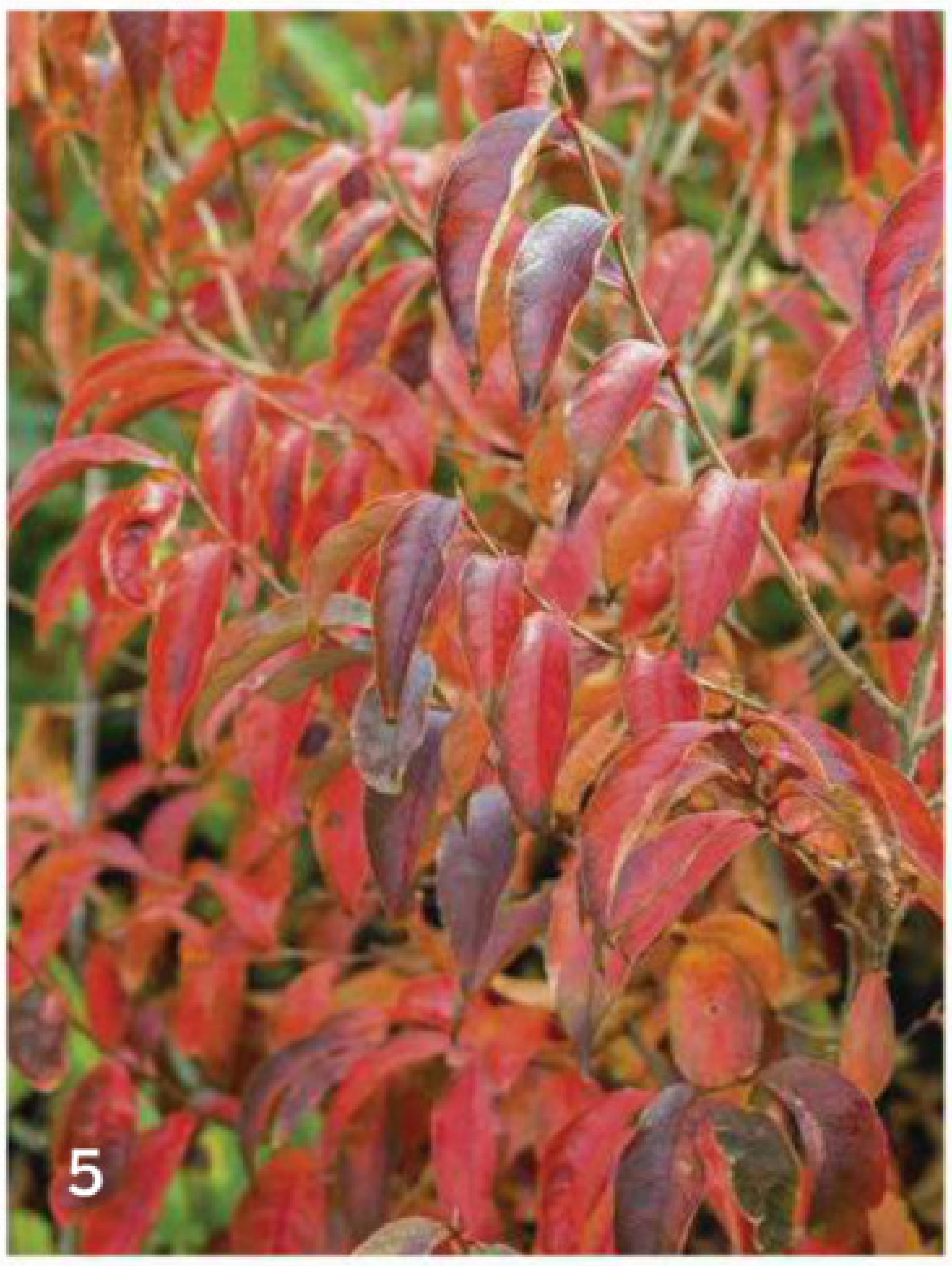
6 *Clethra pringlei*
Large shrub or small tree, for a sheltered spot with long, elegant racemes of cinnamon-scented white flowers, above the attractive, semi-evergreen foliage. Needs acidic soil. 3.5m. USDA 8a-10b.

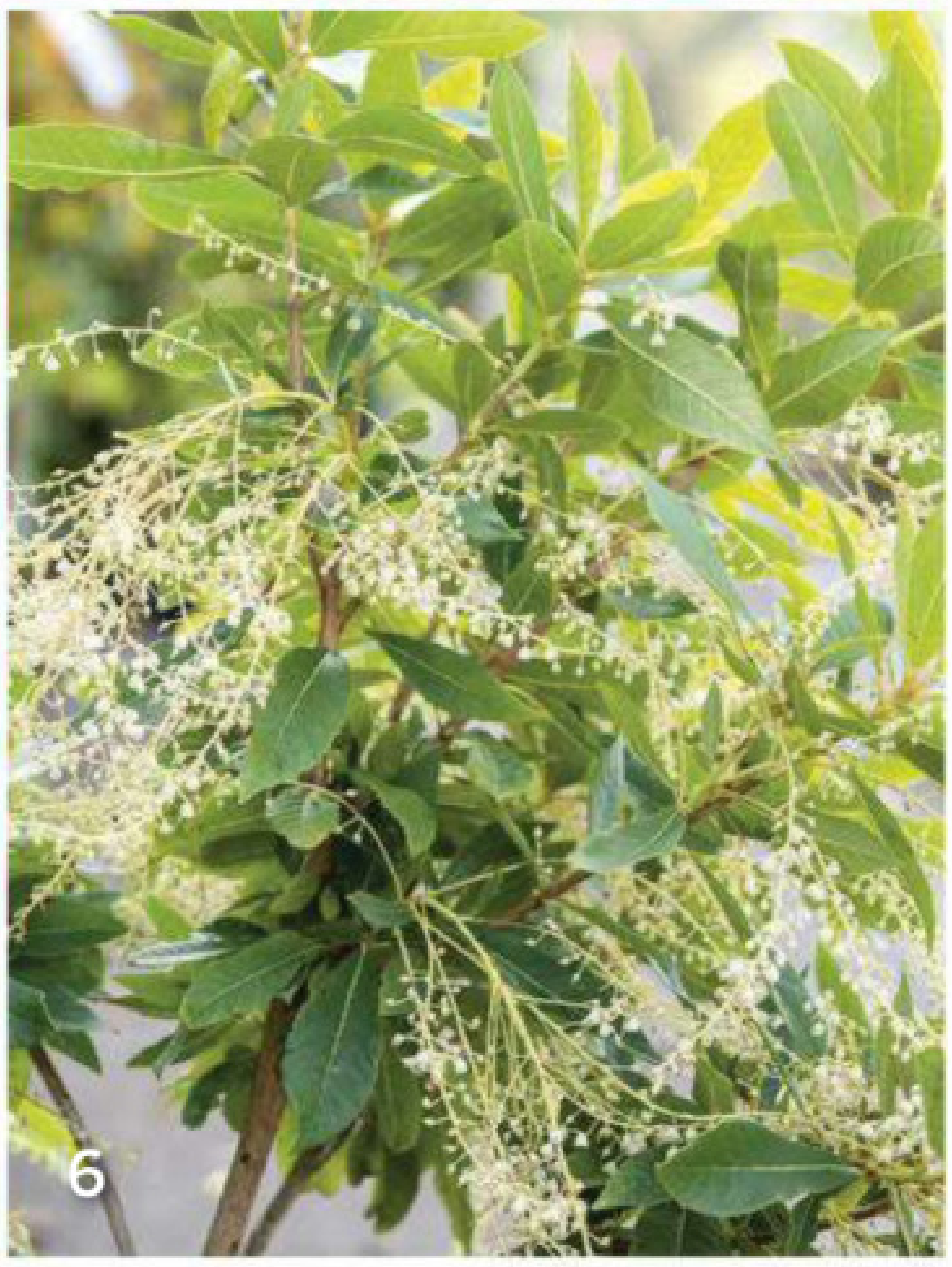












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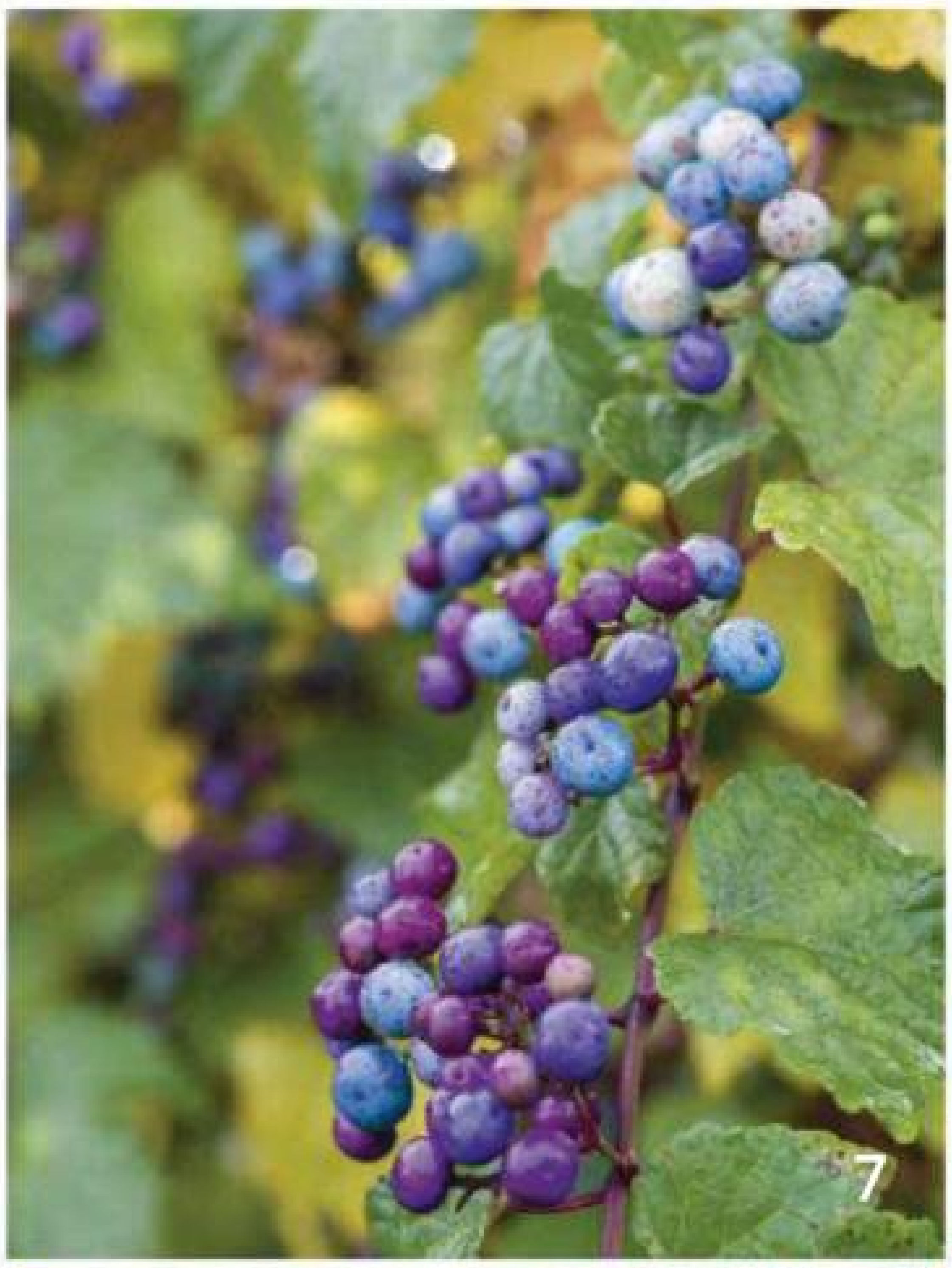
†Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. Hardiness ratings given where available.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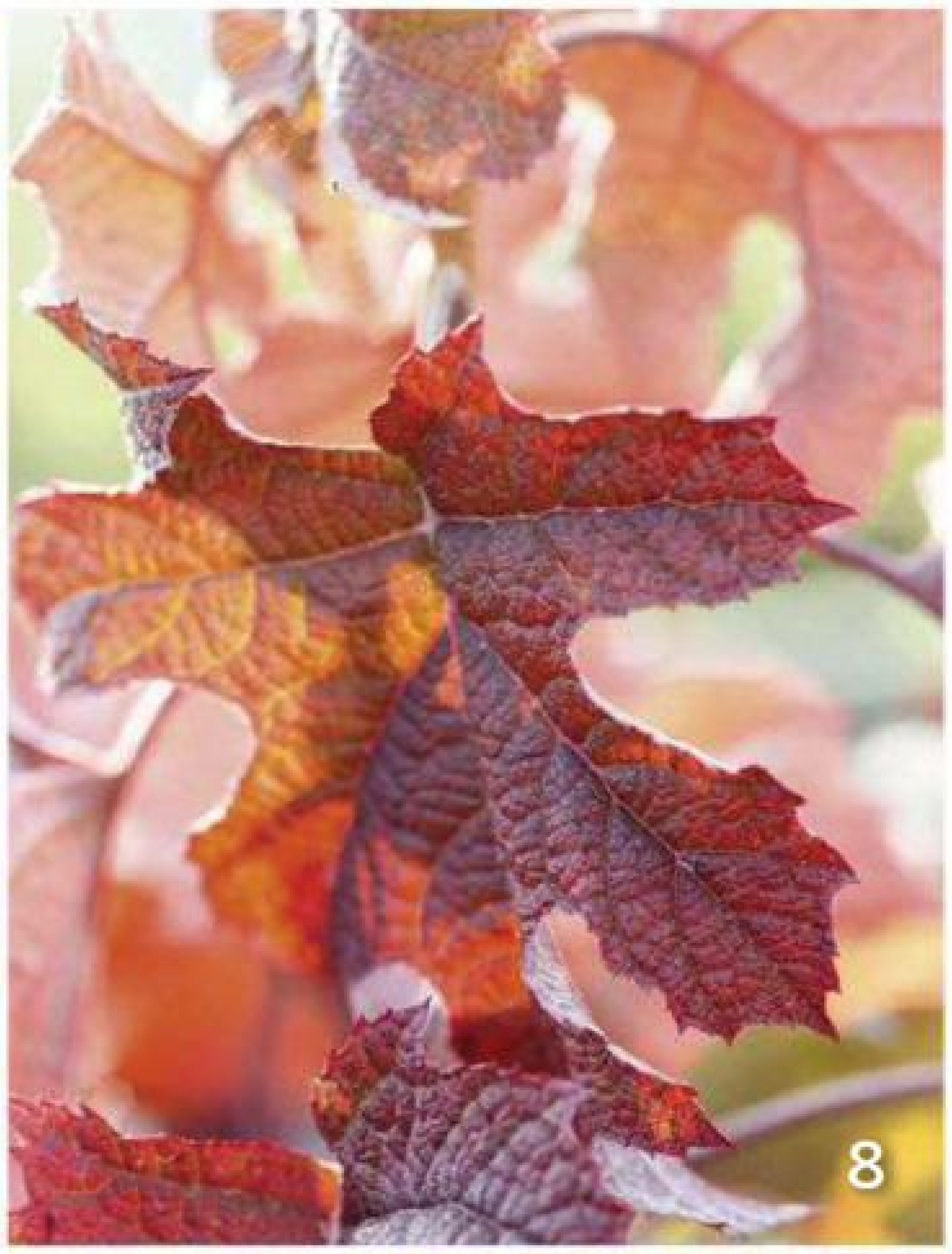
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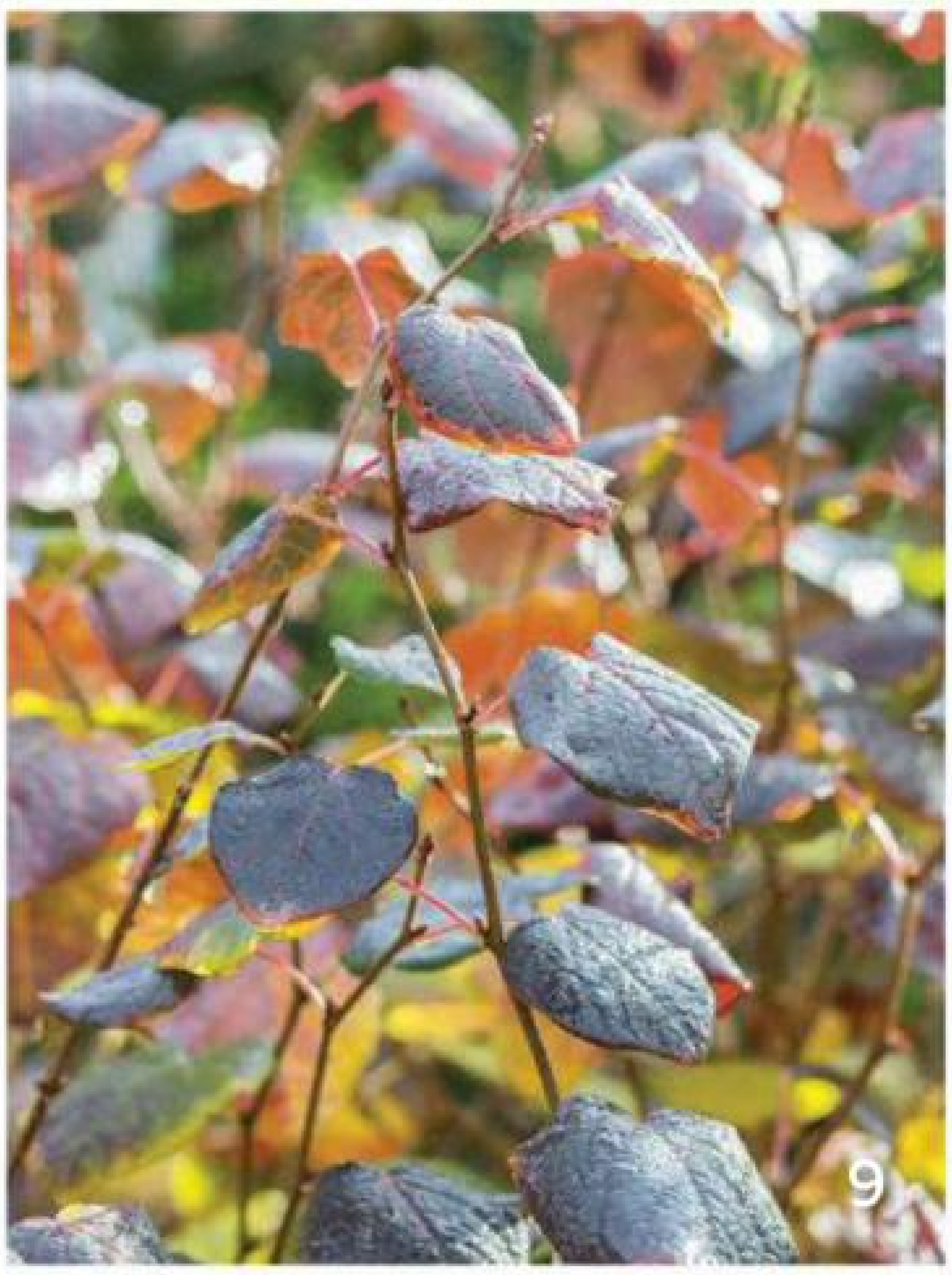
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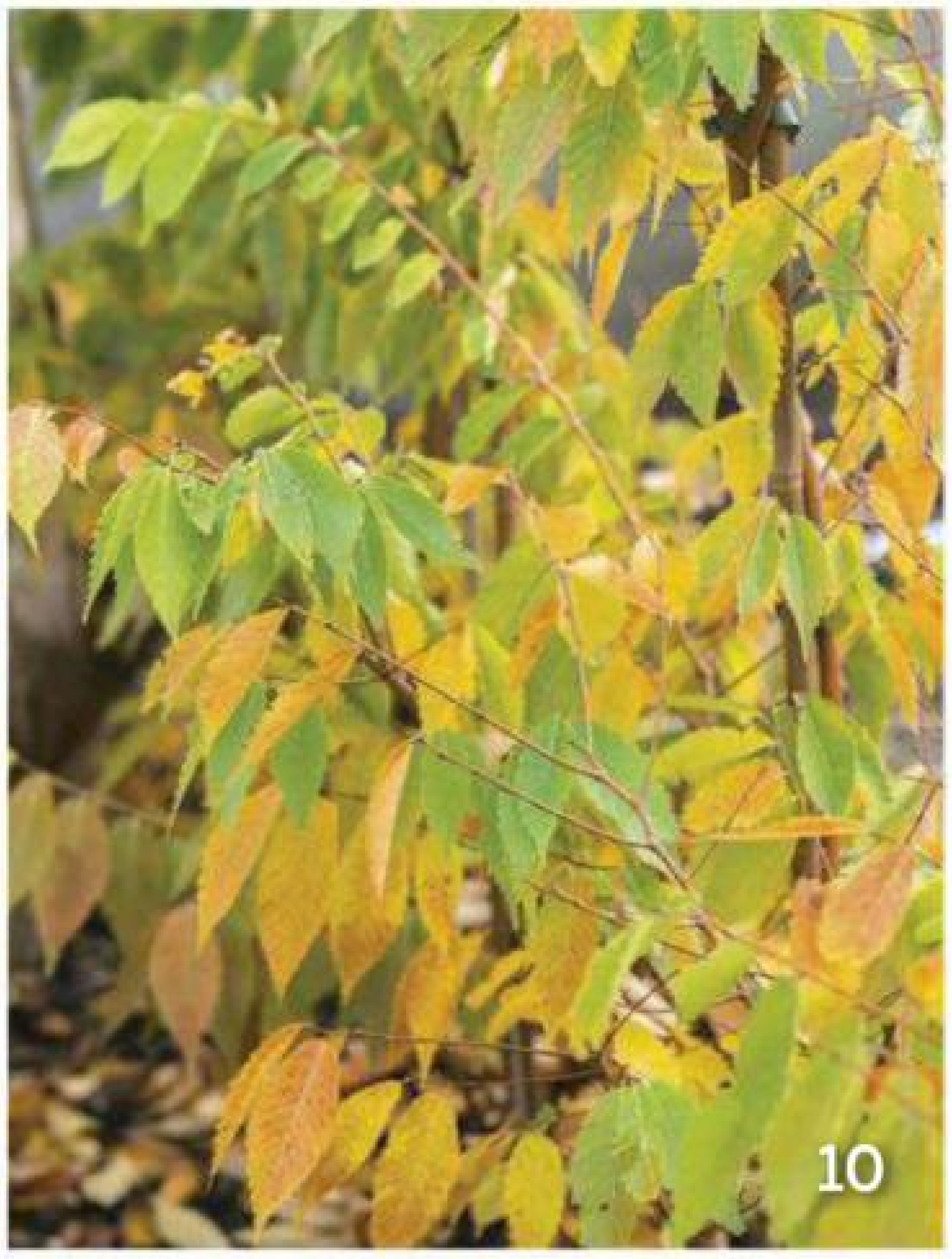
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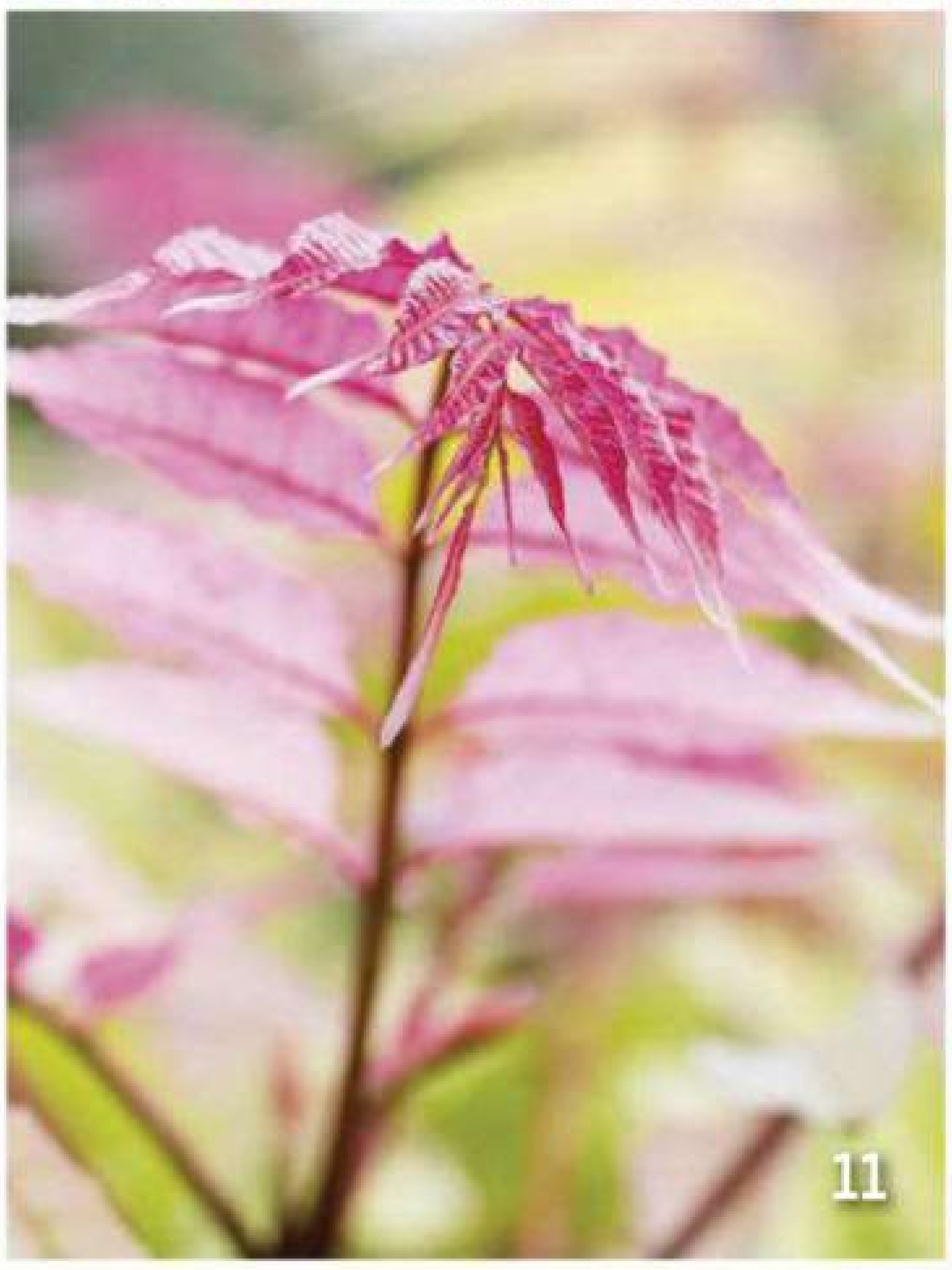
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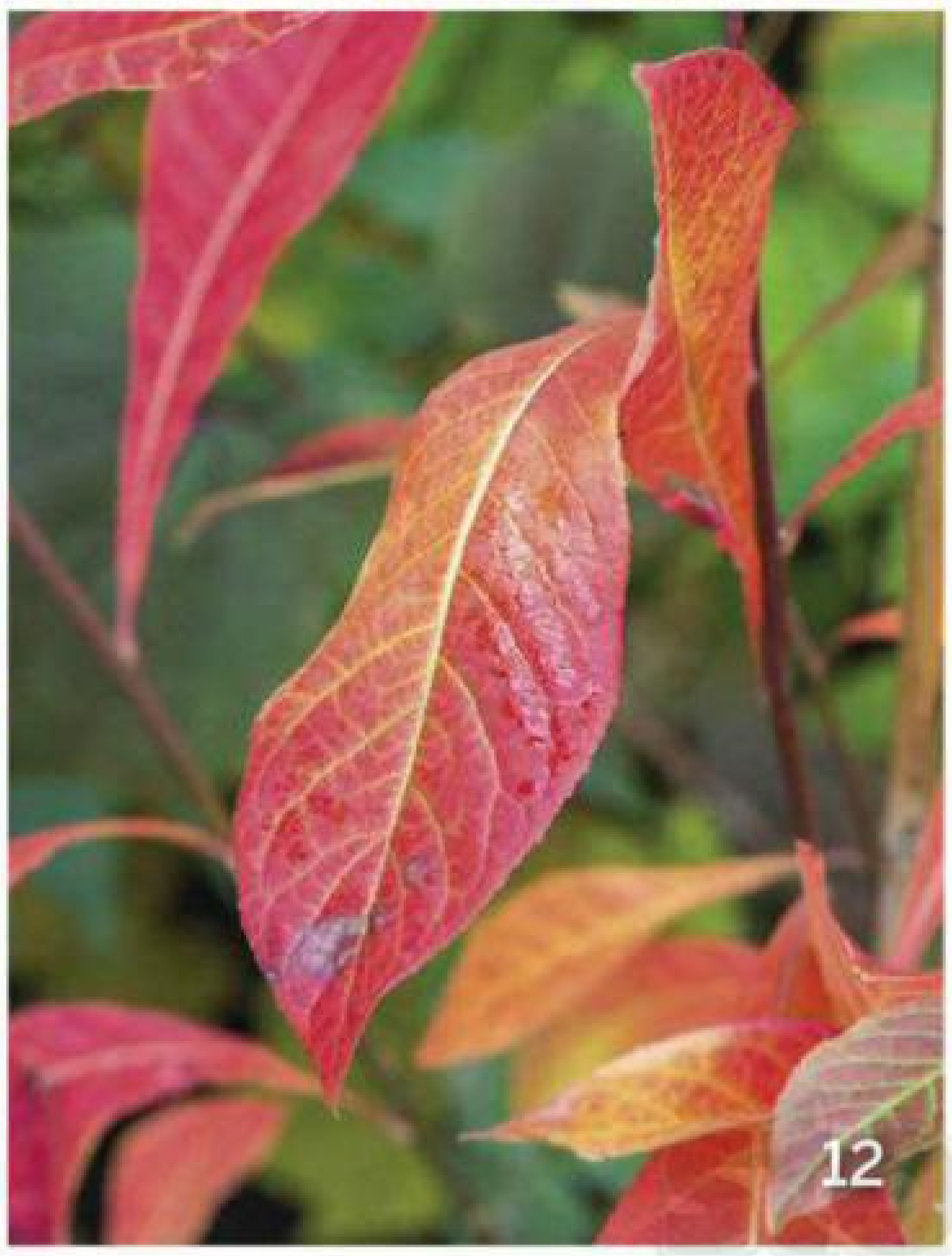
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7 *Ampelopsis brevipedunculata* var. *maximowiczii*
A strong growing climber, with strangely beautiful berries colouring from white, to turquoise, blue and deep purple, which are ignored by birds. Ideal in part shade. The unusual colour scheme is always a talking point and it should be more widely grown. 4.5m. USDA 5a-8b.

8 *Hydrangea quercifolia* 'Burgundy'
A medium-sized shrub boasting boldly lobed, oak-shaped leaves, white flowers ageing to pink and outstanding autumn colour of the deepest burgundy. It is a reliable plant for a moderately sunny position on moist soil. 2m. USDA 5a-9a.

9 *Disanthus cercidifolius*
A medium-sized shrub with bright-green, *Cercis*-like leaves in summer turning to gold, bright red and orange in autumn. Needs moist, well-drained soil in part shade, protected from strong sunshine and strong winds. A light woodland is ideal. A native of Japan, it is uncommon in gardens. 4.5m. AGM*. USDA 5a-8b.

10 *Zelkova serrata* 'Ogon'
A choice small tree, with a beautiful winter silhouette and golden-brown bark. Young growth is intense orange, the foliage yellow, yet it withstands full sun. The nursery is trialling it as a hedge and it is looking good so far. 5m. USDA 5a-9b.

11 *Toona sinensis* 'Flamingo'
The extraordinary, pink, spring foliage of this medium-sized tree is such a show stopper that it can steal the limelight from other spring displays. The leaves later turn creamy yellow then green and flowers appear in summer. All parts of the wood are scented. 15m. RHS H6, USDA 5a-11.

12 *Franklinia alatamaha*
Now extinct in the wild and rare in gardens, this small tree has simple, single, white flowers from midsummer and boasts attractive orange, red and purple foliage in autumn. Needs a warm, sheltered garden. This is a gorgeous plant and a treasure worth cultivating for its rarity and beauty. 6m. RHS H4, USDA 5a-8b.

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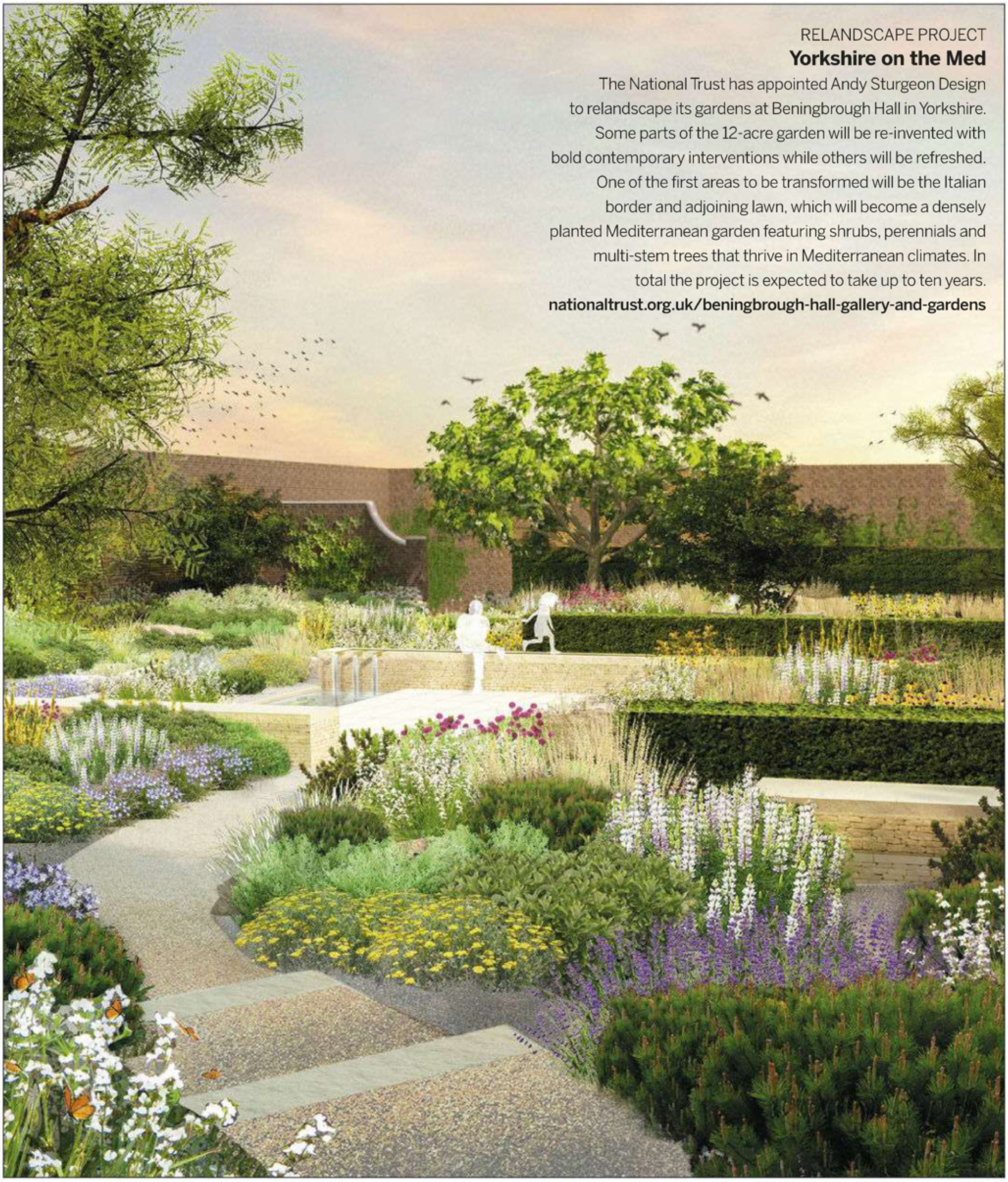
design

Design update, ideas and sourcebook

UPDATE COMPILED BY ANNIE GATTI



ANDY STURGEON DESIGN

RELANDSCAPE PROJECT

Yorkshire on the Med

The National Trust has appointed Andy Sturgeon Design to relandscape its gardens at Beningbrough Hall in Yorkshire. Some parts of the 12-acre garden will be re-invented with bold contemporary interventions while others will be refreshed. One of the first areas to be transformed will be the Italian border and adjoining lawn, which will become a densely planted Mediterranean garden featuring shrubs, perennials and multi-stem trees that thrive in Mediterranean climates. In total the project is expected to take up to ten years. **nationaltrust.org.uk/beningbrough-hall-gallery-and-gardens**

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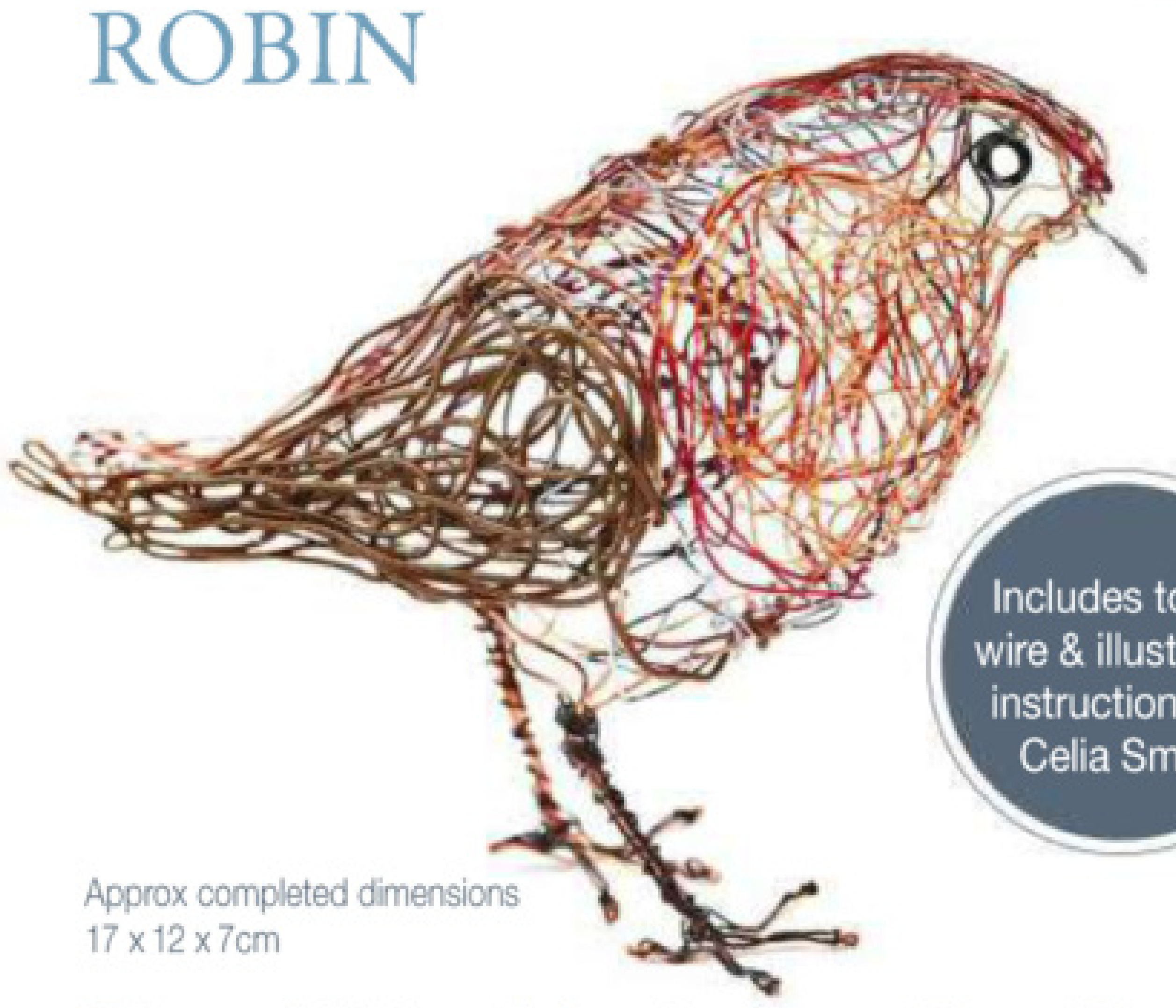

Includes tools, wire & illustrated instructions by Celia Smith

Approx completed dimensions
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This superb kit is a collaboration between Twenty Twenty Gallery and contemporary artist Celia Smith. It contains all you need to create a stunning wire bird sculpture.

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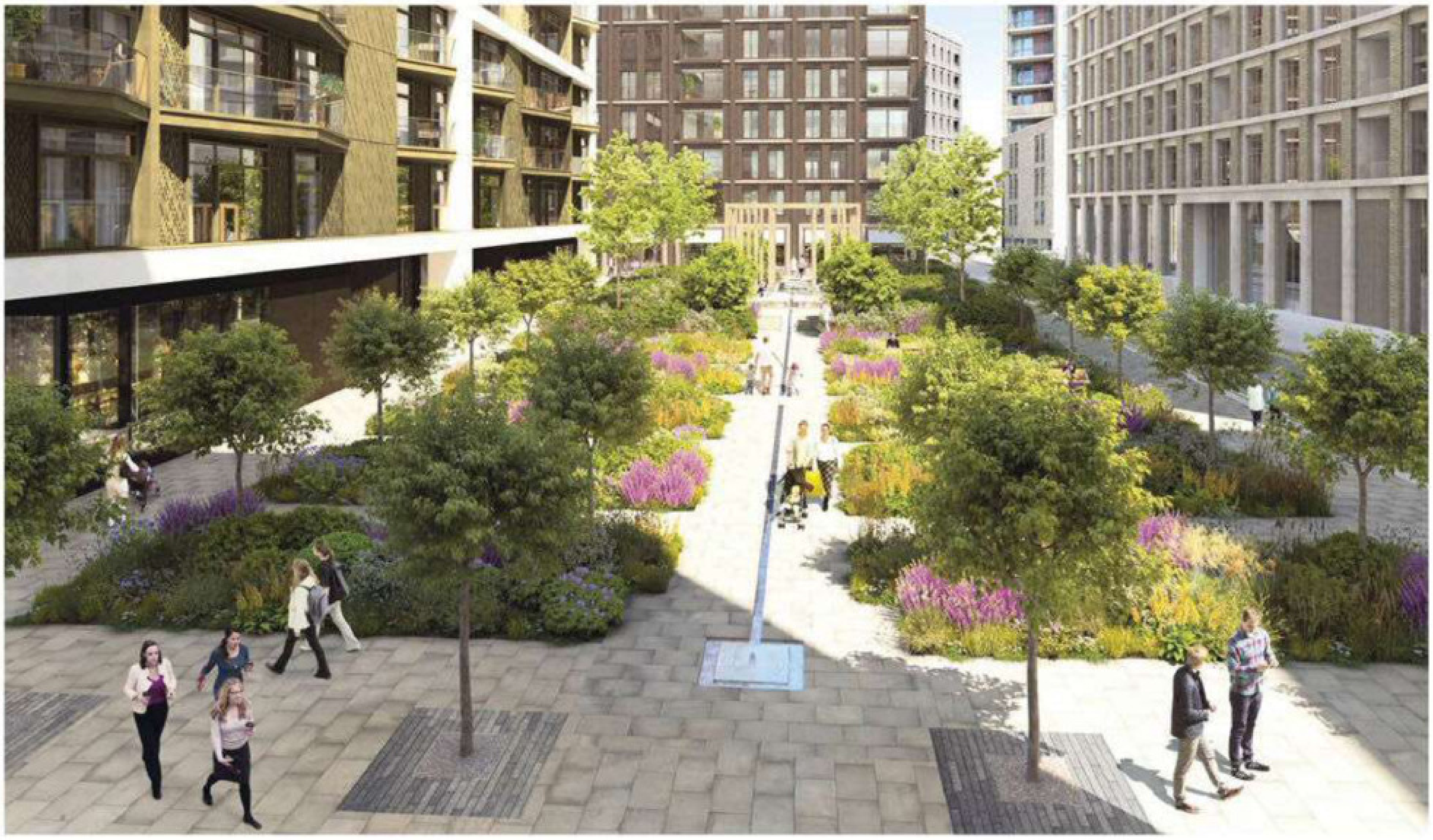


URBAN REDEVELOPMENT

Greening the city

The most recent green space to be revealed at the King's Cross Development is the Jellicoe Gardens, a public square surrounded by residential buildings on all sides. Designed by Tom Stuart-Smith, in collaboration with master planners TLA, the intensively planted garden will have a geometric layout with a central rill, inspired by the Bagh-e Fin Garden in Iran. Framed by oriental plane trees, an open-roofed timber pavilion, with a central pool, will provide a viewing point down the sloping garden. Seating along the transverse paths will offer peaceful stopping places among the romantic herbaceous planting. Work is due to begin in 2017. **tomstuartsmith.co.uk**

FLOATING ISLAND

Bright idea

Danish architects CF Møller Landscape has won a competition to build an urban water park on three linked circular islands for the Copenhagen International School. The decked floating classrooms will offer students, as well as the local community, the chance to try water activities, such as kayaking, water polo and swimming. Each island has its own character and will be softened with marginal plants. **cis.dk**

CF MØLLER, MILLER HARE

HOT STUFF

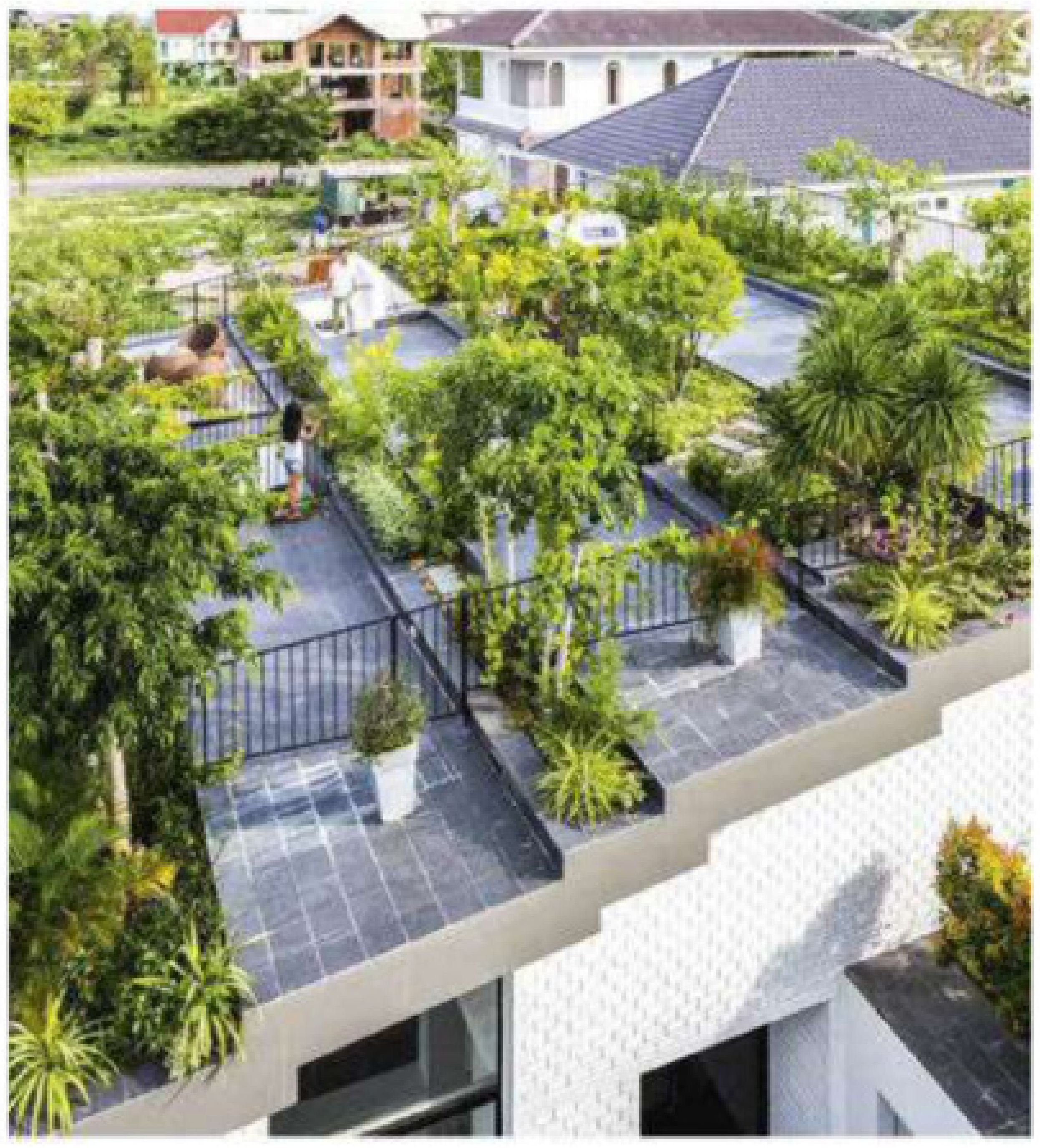
Carry on cooking outdoors through the colder months with this versatile table-top pizza oven from Blistering Ovens. The wood-fired oven is available in four colours and three sizes with prices starting at £1,240, plus VAT (wooden stand not included).

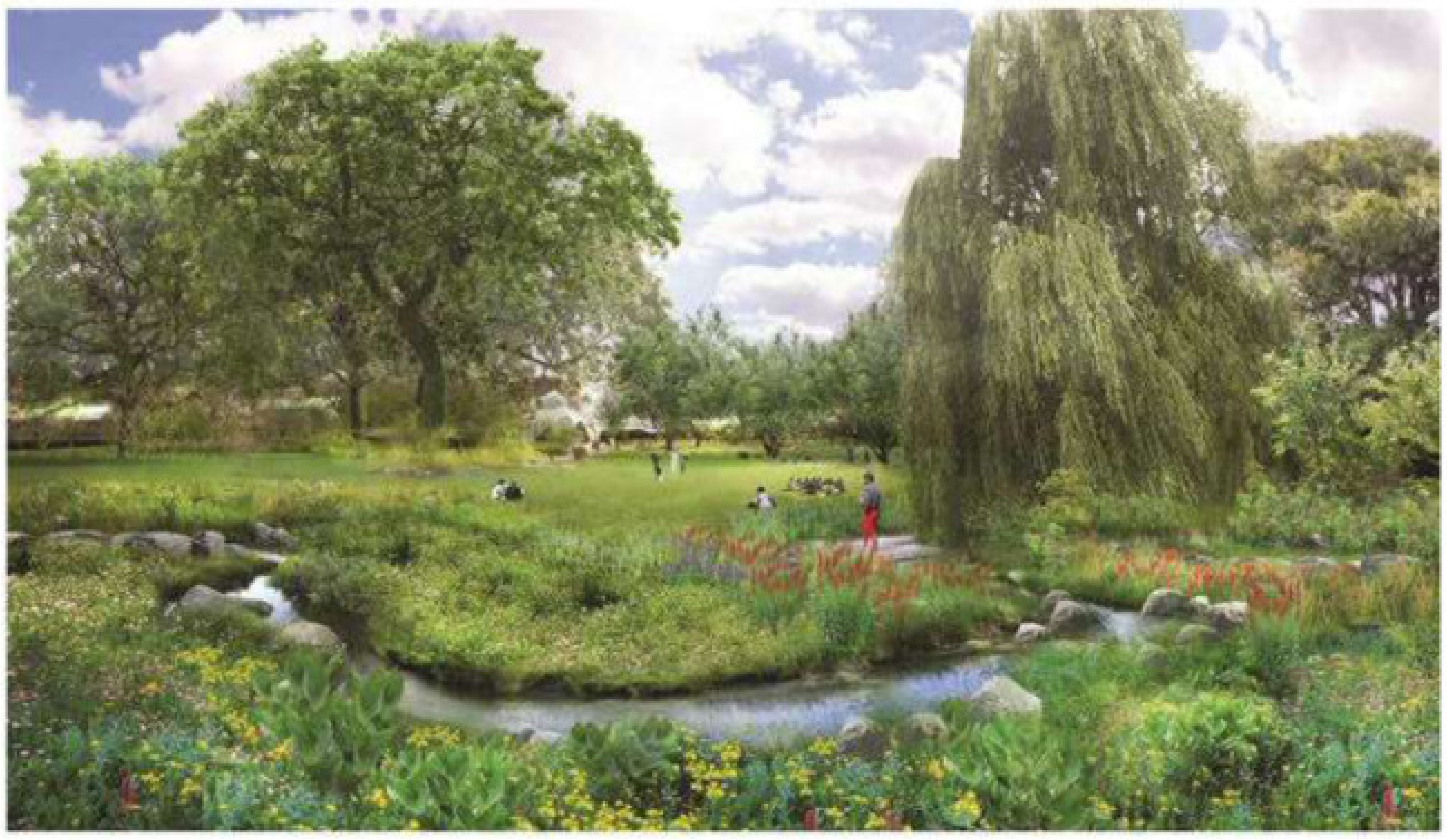
blisteringwoodfiredovens.co.uk

INNOVATIVE DESIGN

Up on the roof

Vietnamese architect Vo Trong Nghia, in collaboration with Tokyo-based architect Masaki Iwamoto, has come up with an ingenious solution for maximising garden space for a home in the Vietnamese city of Nha Trang. Planning guidelines had stipulated the new build had to have a sloping roof, at least half of which was covered in tiles. A lush, roof-top garden has been created by making a series of terraced beds filled with trees, shrubs and other plants. **votrongnghia.com**





NEW GARDEN

Bucolic Brooklyn

A new garden, by landscape architects Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, Inc (MVVA), has opened at Brooklyn Botanic Garden in New York. Modelled on wetlands in the greater New York City region, the one-and-a-half-acre Shelby White and Leon Levy Water Garden, includes innovative sustainability features, and incorporates many native plants, including rare and exotic riverside species. **bbg.org**

FUNDING

Cash flow

Russell Gardens in Dover, previously known as Kearnsey Court, is one of 16 parks across the UK to share more than £30.7 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund and Big Lottery Fund to restore their landscapes. Designed by Thomas Mawson in the Arts and Crafts style, Russell Gardens features a series of terraces cascading down a hillside and culminating in a canal pond, spanned by ornamental bridges. **hlf.org.uk**

Notebook

- This autumn's **Info Burst short courses** run by the London College of Garden Design look at ethical design. On 7 November the use of sustainable materials is considered, and on 28 November designer Jo Thompson and photographer Rachel Warne with LCGD director Andrew Fisher Tomlin discuss the ethics of planting design and whether designers' ideas can be protected. At Regent's University, Regent's Park, 6-8pm; lcgd.org.uk
- Out of the Shrubbery is the theme for the **SGD's Autumn Conference** which takes place at the Royal Geographical Society, London, on 26 November. Speakers include Juan Grimm, Arabella Lennox-Boyd, Nigel Dunnett, Jennie Gay and Roger Phillips. sgd.org.uk
- Two 'Capability' Brown landscapes, **Stoke Place** in Buckinghamshire and **Peper Harow Park** in Surrey, have been added to the National Heritage List for England, and seven other sites have been re-listed. A new online map, created by Historic England, shows the principal 'Capability' Brown landscapes in England. services.historicengland.org.uk
- London's **Natural History Museum** has been granted planning permission to redevelop its building and grounds with a design by landscape architect Kim Wilkie. The design extends the garden around all four sides of the building but also encroaches on the established Wildlife Garden.
- The restored glasshouse at **Wynyard Hall,** Tees Valley, is now open to the public and will be a venue for classes and courses in flower arranging, as well as organic gardening and art and crafts. wynyardhall.co.uk

HIROYUKI-OKI, BROOKLYN BOTANIC GARDEN, KEARNSEY ABBEY GARDENS/HLF

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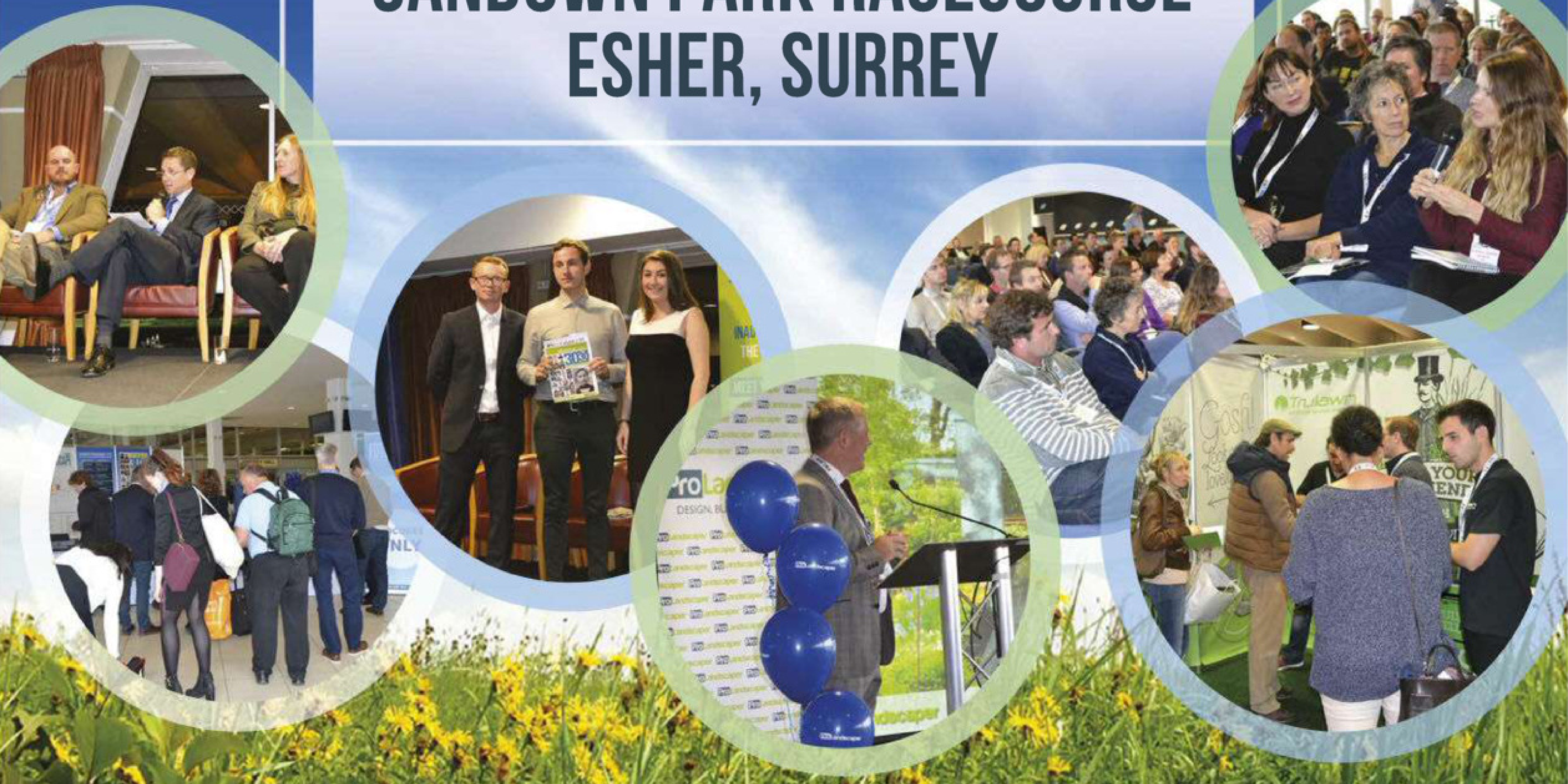

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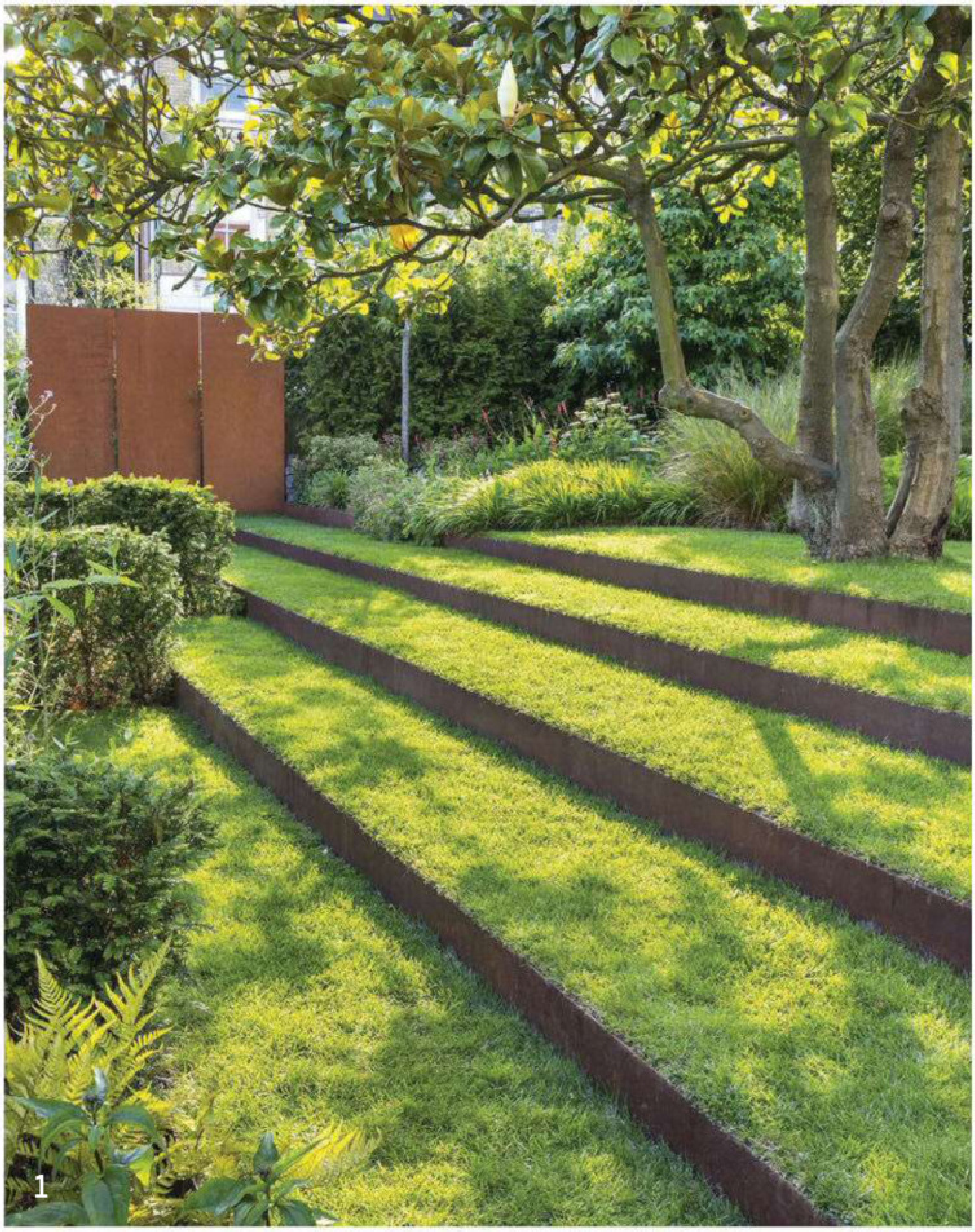


1 MARIANNE MAJERUS / DESIGN: SARA JANE ROTHWELL

1 Straight ahead

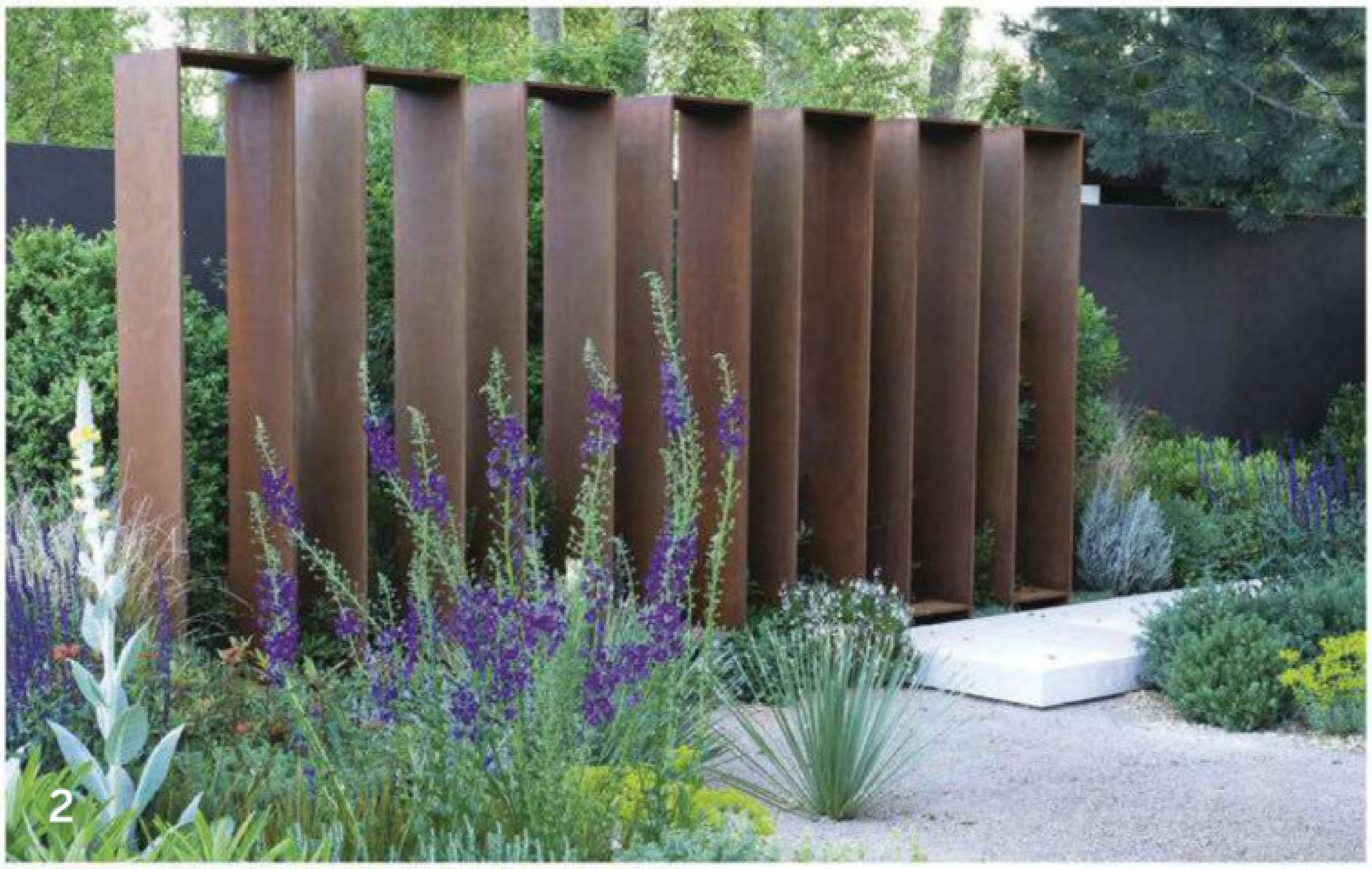
Grass steps are always a bit tricky because you have to keep lifting the mower and then there is usually a lot of strimming to do afterwards to tidy up the corners. These handsome Corten steel risers make it a bit easier by defining the edges. I also love the screen made from a triptych of steel menhirs.

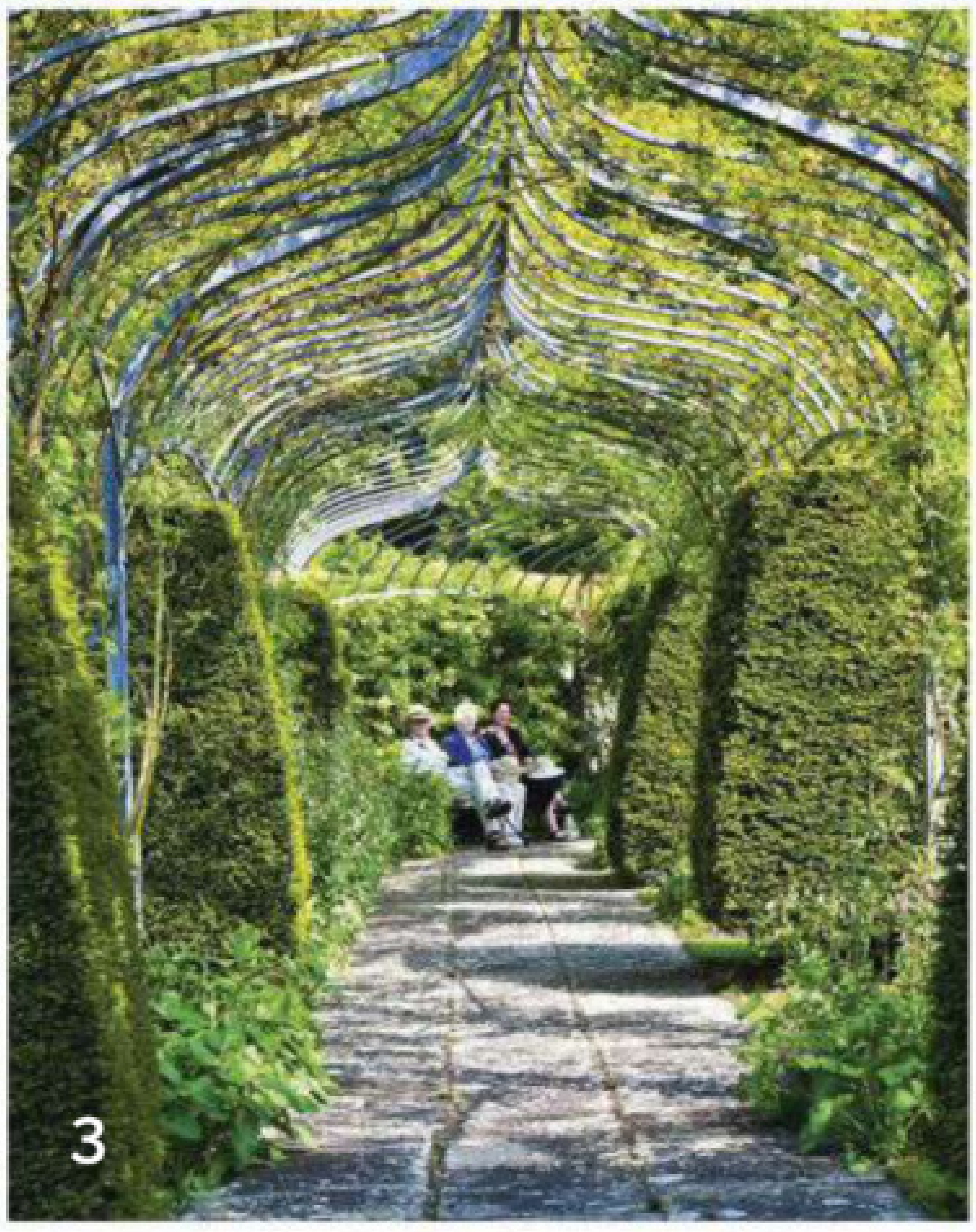
James Alexander-Sinclair is a garden designer, writer, broadcaster and founder of into-gardens.com. He has served on the RHS Council for the past five years.

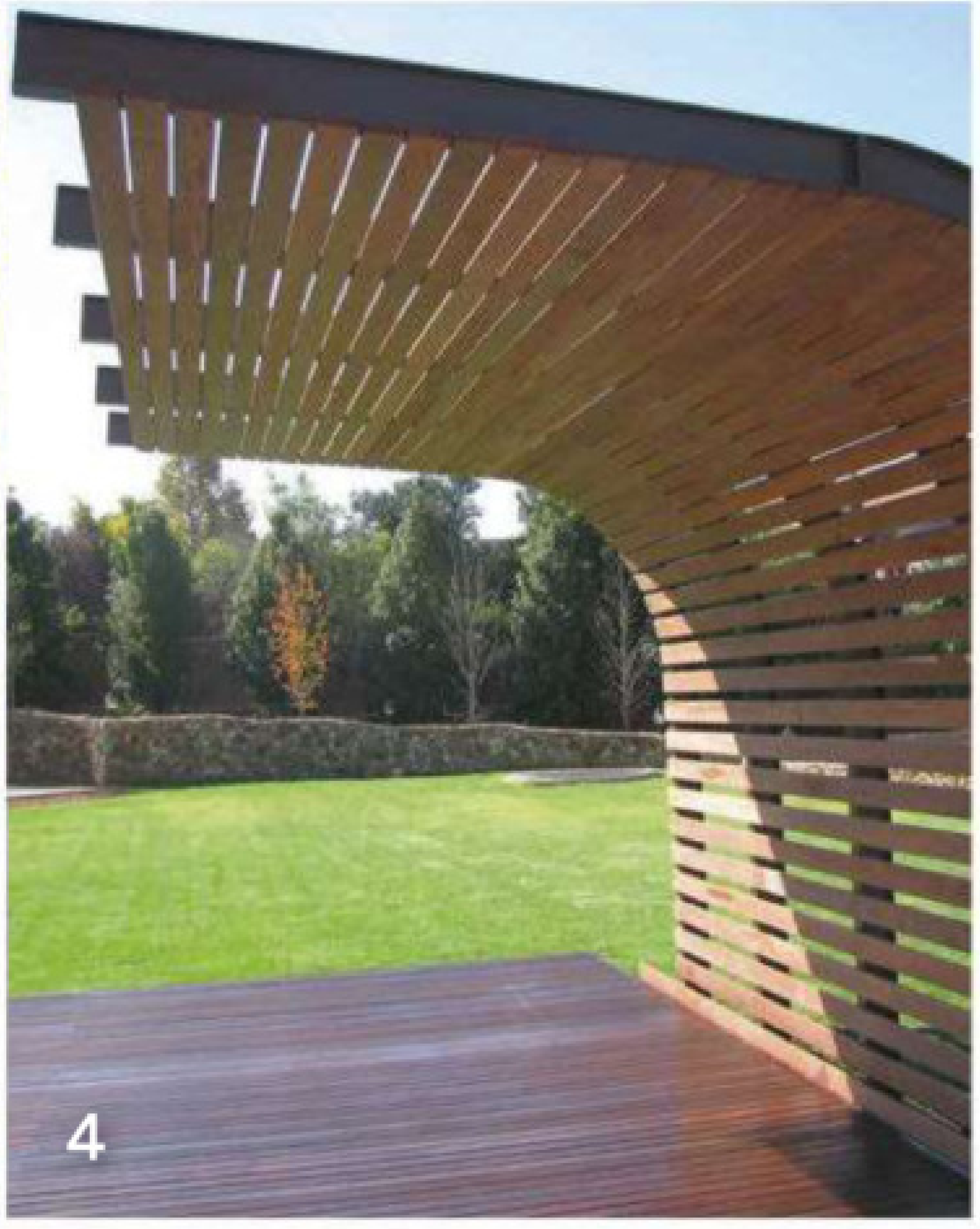
Industrial revolution

Historically steel has not been widely used in gardens, but, argues James Alexander-Sinclair, the contrast of the man-made against the natural can work surprisingly well

WORDS JAMES ALEXANDER-SINCLAIR







2 HEATHER EDWARDS / GAP PHOTOS DESIGN: ANDY STURGEON, 3 © ANNA STOWE BOTANICA / ALAMY, 4 TRUESTYLE HARD LANDSCAPE SOLUTIONS

2 Standing tall

A very spectacular use of steel by Andy Sturgeon in his garden for *The Daily Telegraph* at the 2010 RHS Chelsea Flower Show. There were three series of Corten steel monoliths, which formed screens that stood like massive sentries guarding the gates. They also did a sterling job of framing views into the garden.

3 Crowning glory

Here's an elegant steel pergola with an apex that swoops upwards like a coronet. The secret is to have lots of horizontals to give plenty of places to tie in plants. This prevents the phenomenon of 'exposed knee' – where all the flowers are at the top, while the lower reaches are knobbly and naked.

4 Brain wave

Part arch, part garden building, part shelter. From a practical viewpoint this is a good combination of steel supports and wafers of timber to give shade. Aesthetically, it is innovative, exciting and sculptural. What more could you possibly wish for to enhance your outdoor space?

I have a friend who likes to pepper his garden with steel structures. When wandering through his bucolic acres it is fun to be surprised by shards of mirrored steel or laser-cut and powder-coated archways, all beautifully sited to make the best of surrounding shrubbery or distant views. This is nothing new: people have been populating their gardens with such things for centuries, if not millennia. The difference is in the materials. In olden days there was marble and finely crafted stonework in abundance, but not much in the way of steel, at least not obviously. It was there, of course, in the pins that pinioned the putti and the skeletons that supported the buildings. But it was chorus line rather than prima donna.

The more prominent use of steel in gardens is a 20th-century phenomenon. It coincides, I suppose, with the Richard Rogers idea of putting all the pipes and services on the outside, as he did with the Pompidou Centre in Paris and London's Lloyd's Building. Think of it as a version of the classic (though possibly no longer politically correct) movie scene where the frumpy secretary shakes loose her hair and removes her horn-rimmed spectacles. The bones of the industrial revolution are finally laid bare in all their glory and, my goodness Miss Jones, you are beautiful!

There are various types of steel available to use in our gardens. Stainless steel is unashamedly modern, slick and clean. Galvanised steel is rugged and ages to the graceful grey of an old bucket, while powder-coated is practical and allows us to have any colour we want without the pain of actually having to paint the stuff ourselves. There is also Corten steel, which is the rufty tufty hipster of the bunch, much loved by show garden designers ▷

5 Don't fret

For his Chelsea 2016 garden, designer Chris Beardshaw built a contemporary pavilion using fretwork panels made of Corten steel with finely cut oak leaves, which cast a lovely, dappled shade.

6 Pole position

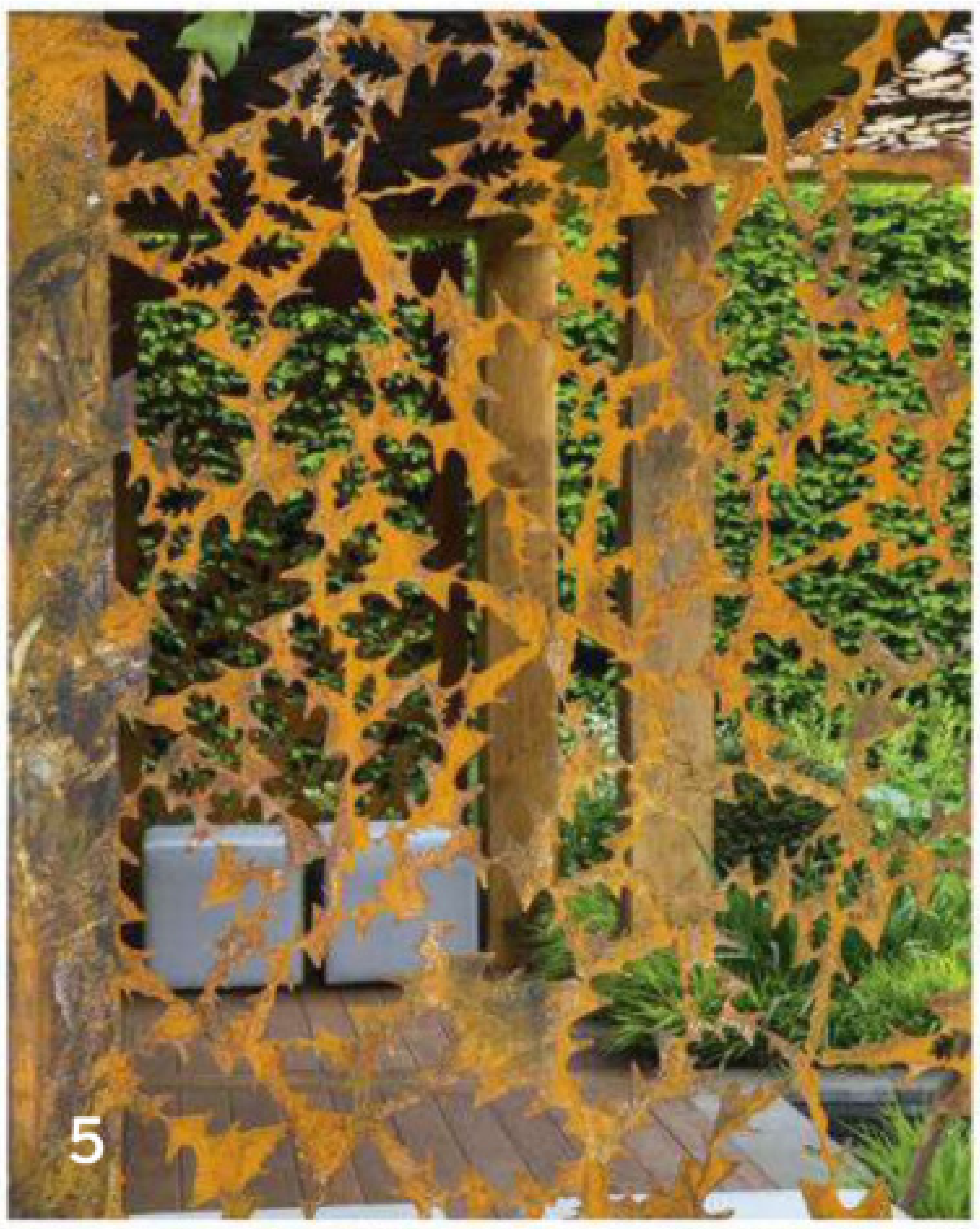
A clever use of scaffolding by Alex Bell at the 2011 RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show. It's modern and functional as a fence, plant support, pergola or dividing screen.

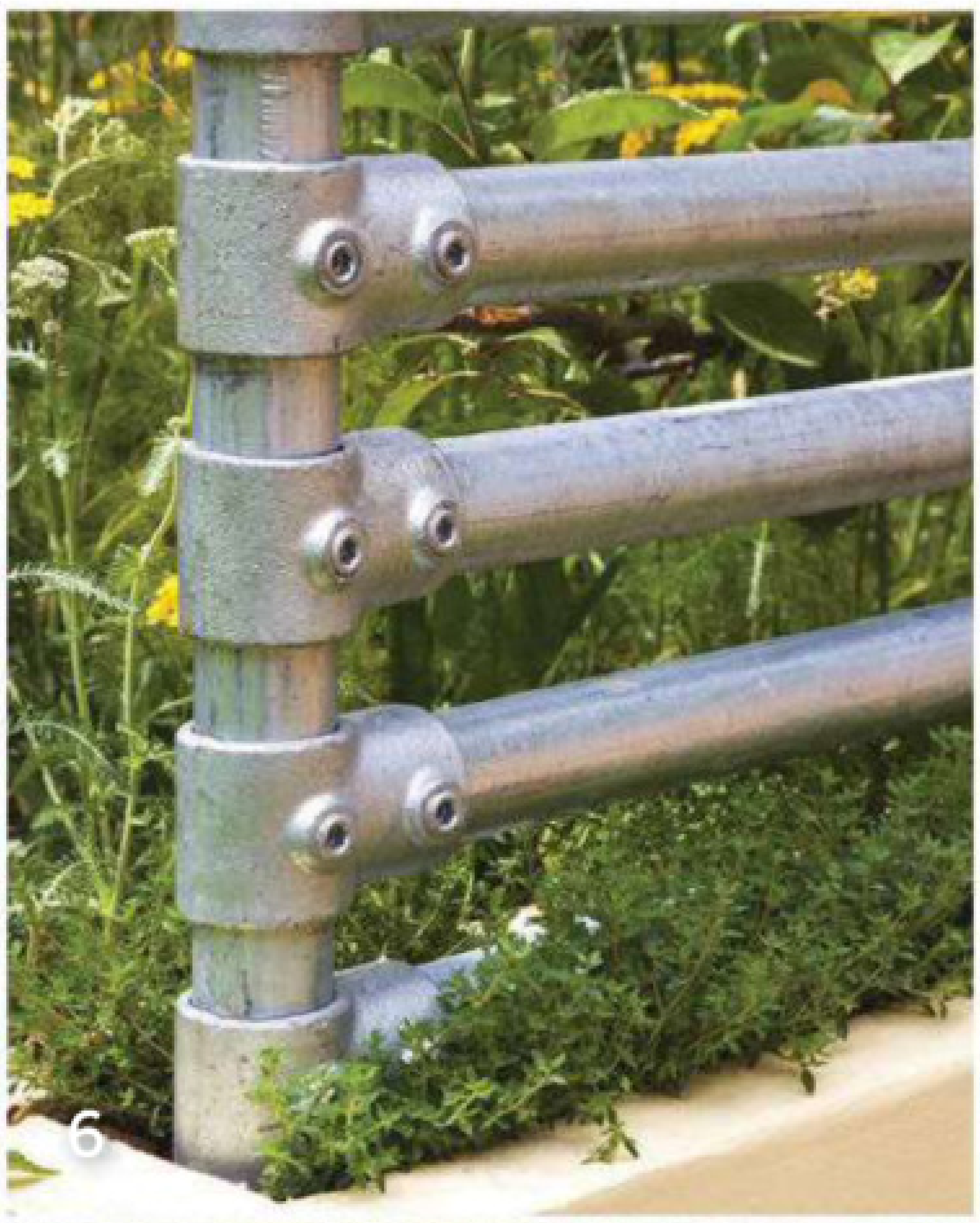
7 Shining example

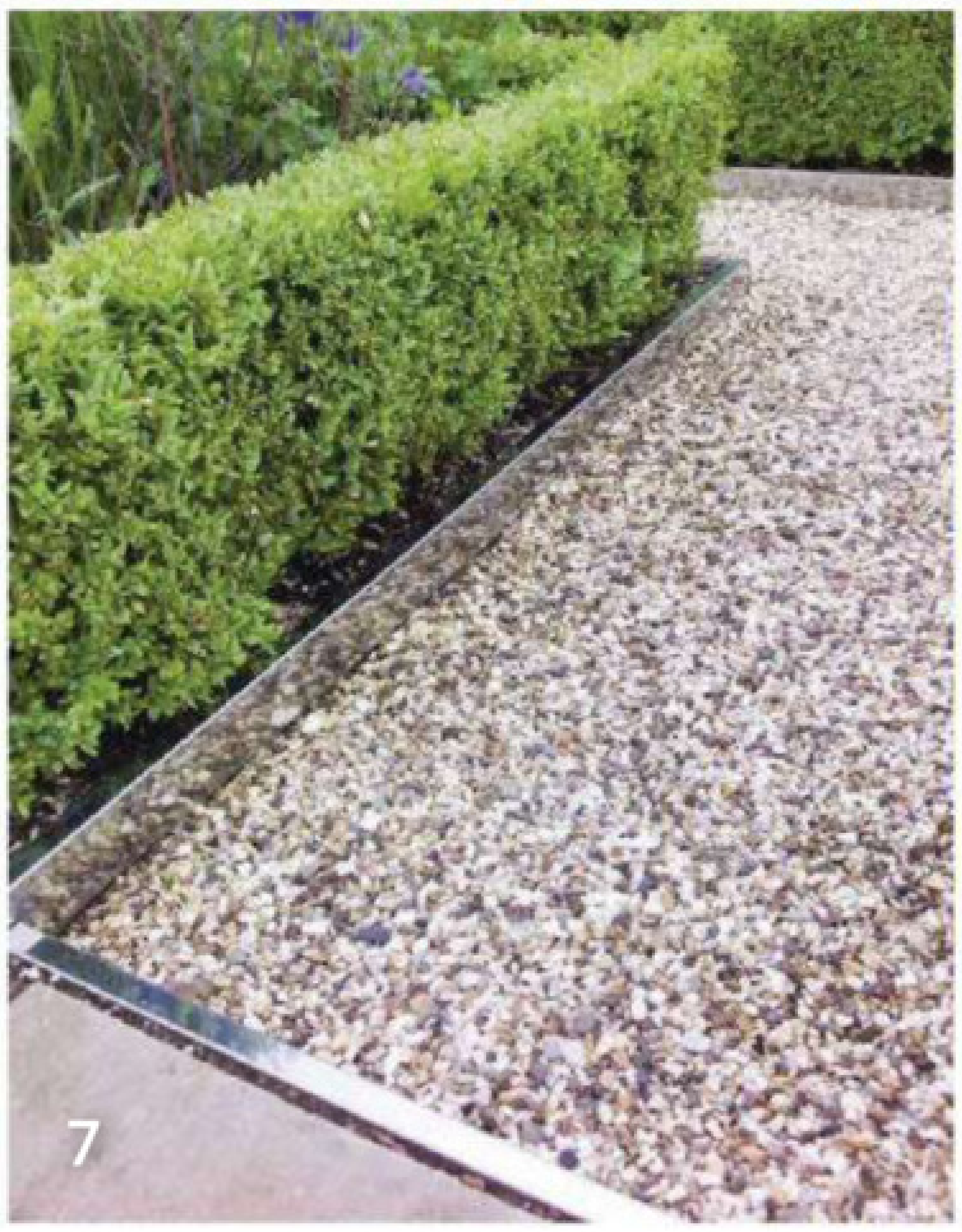
My client didn't like the idea of the timber to edge the pathways so we clad it with a bit of folded stainless steel. It reflects the gravel and the box and the client could admire his reflection. The only dissatisfied party was the gardener who had to polish it!

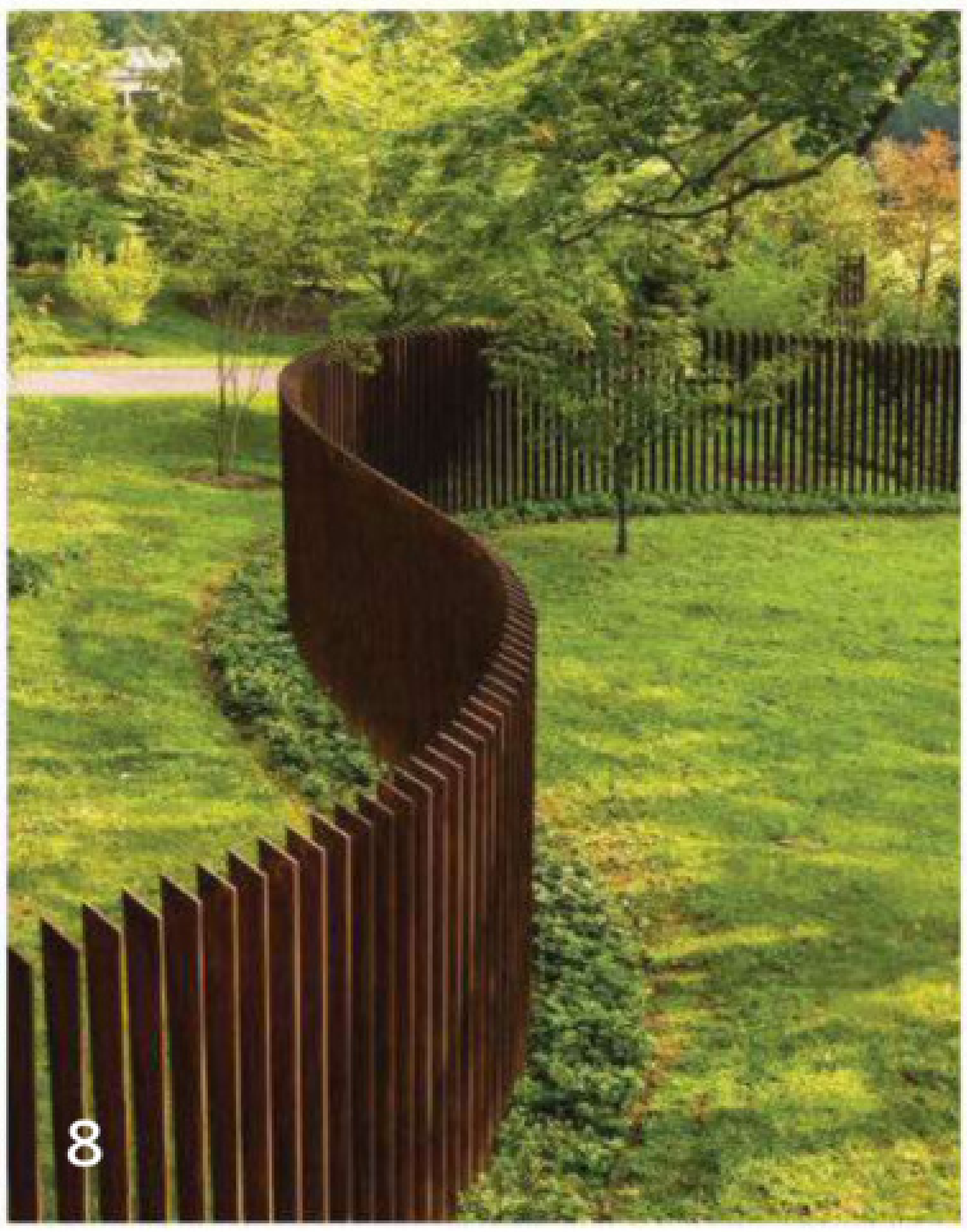
8 Keeping ahead

This is one of my favourite fences; so simple and yet so effective. I love the way it sashays off into the distance with only the most fleeting of backward glances. It may not keep rabbits off your lettuces, but it makes an elegant feature from something that is usually purely functional.







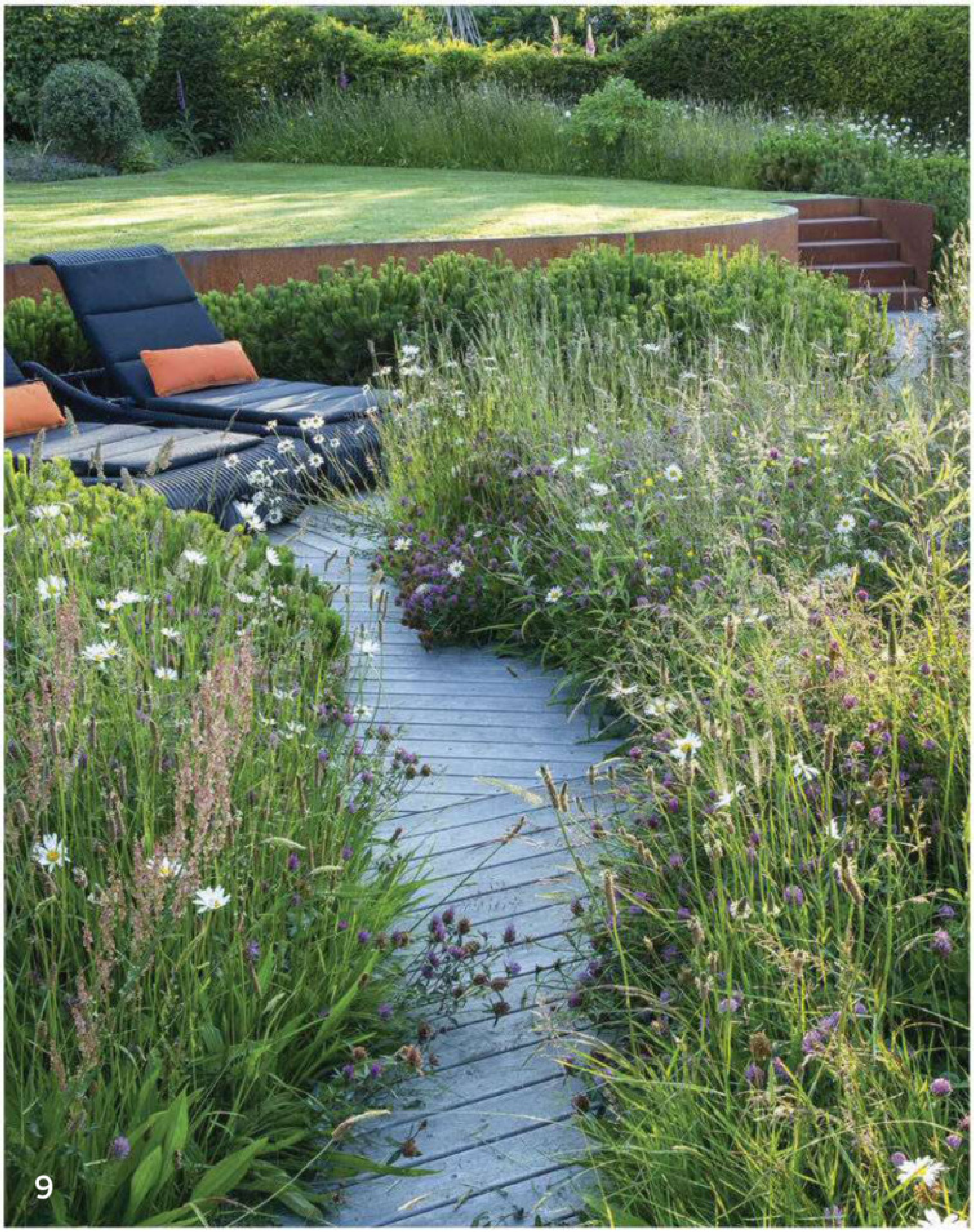


5 MARIANNE MAJERUS / THE MORGAN STANLEY GARDEN FOR GREAT ORMOND STREET HOSPITAL, RHS CHELSEA FLOWER SHOW 2016 / DESIGN: CHRIS BEARDSHAW, 6 ROB WHITWORTH / GAP PHOTOS / THE DEPTFORD PROJECT: AN URBAN HARVEST GARDEN DESIGNED BY ALEX BELL AT THE RHS HAMPTON COURT FLOWER, 7 ANDREA JONES, 8 ARCHERBUCHANAN.COM / IMAGE: TOMCRANEPHOTOGRAPHY.COM

▷ and the groovier architects. It is basically a steel alloy that takes on the attractive colour of rust without the inconvenience of decay. It is a material that works particularly well in gardens as the colours of the steel and the sheer bulk of the metal seem to contrast well with plants.

In the hands of a skilled craftsman, steel can be transformed into pretty much anything – squares, curves, walls or edges. There are lots of good blacksmiths dotted around the countryside who can do clever things with metal (although pretty much any steel fabricator can help, given a sketch and a decent brief). Steel also has excellent environmental credentials as it can be recycled into other things. If I remember my school scripture classes correctly, it is even mentioned in Isaiah: 'They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks.' I once had a whole lot of obelisks made from parts of old Citroëns and we have all seen structures made from old horseshoes and farm machinery. It does not even have to be that complicated – if the idea of welding, bending and folding brings you out in a cold sweat, there are readily available pre-manufactured options.

I once made a garden that consisted mostly of scaffolding poles and chains. It was fun to do, but slightly annoyed the neighbours. What it did achieve, however, was to show that scaffolding was a simple and adaptable way of building things. Since then I have made climbing frames, handrails, furniture and pergolas from scaffolding. It works like a grown-up, heftier sort of K'nex (a 1990s version of Meccano, but with no fiddly washers). It bolts together quickly, is very stable and easily changed. The things I learned about using chain in a garden have not been



9 MARIANNE MAJERUS / DESIGN: AN KITSON

9 Follow the curve

A wall of Corten steel – look at the way it curves. You would have trouble doing that with stone or railway sleepers. It will, however, need good supports to hold up under the pressure of the soil.

quite so useful, but I live in hope as it makes a satisfying screen: relatively weatherproof and it rattles soothingly in the wind.

If you want something a little less outré, then a classic pergola or arbour can be made from sections of steel as thin and elegant as a whippet's leg. This is particularly useful in smaller gardens where you may be a bit short on available space. There are many companies who will happily knock you up an arbour or a gazebo in a variety of different shapes and patterns.

In short, steel is wonderful stuff – for structure, for elegance, for utility and for sculpture. Pretty much anything that can be made from wood or timber can be made from steel, but without the weight or the bulk. Once you get the hang of it, steel makes superlative raised beds, benches, walls and border edges as sharp as a freshly pressed trouser crease. □

Useful information

If you are looking for someone to make a bespoke steel structure for your garden try Hot Metal Engineering, based in south Oxfordshire. Tel 01865 400753, **hmeng.co.uk**

For simple but effective steel pergolas and arches try Harrod Horticultural. Their products are stocked at RHS Garden, Wisley, Tincleton Lifestyle, Dorchester, Dorset and Burford Garden Company, Burford, Oxfordshire. Tel 0333 400 1500, **harrodhorticultural.com**

If you fancy having a go at making something yourself, there are one-day metalwork taster courses on offer at West Dean College. West Dean, nr Chichester, West Sussex PO18 0QZ.
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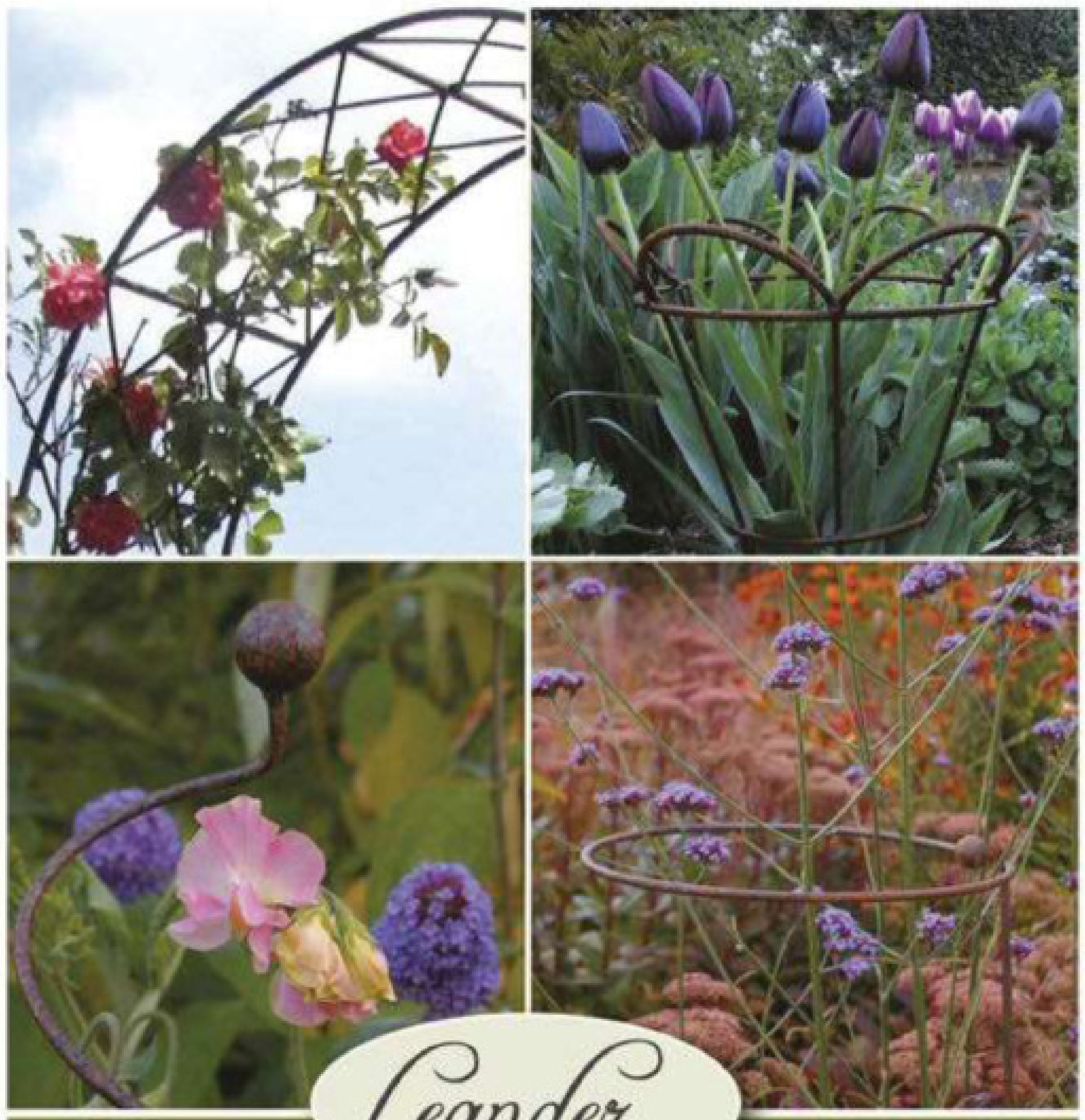

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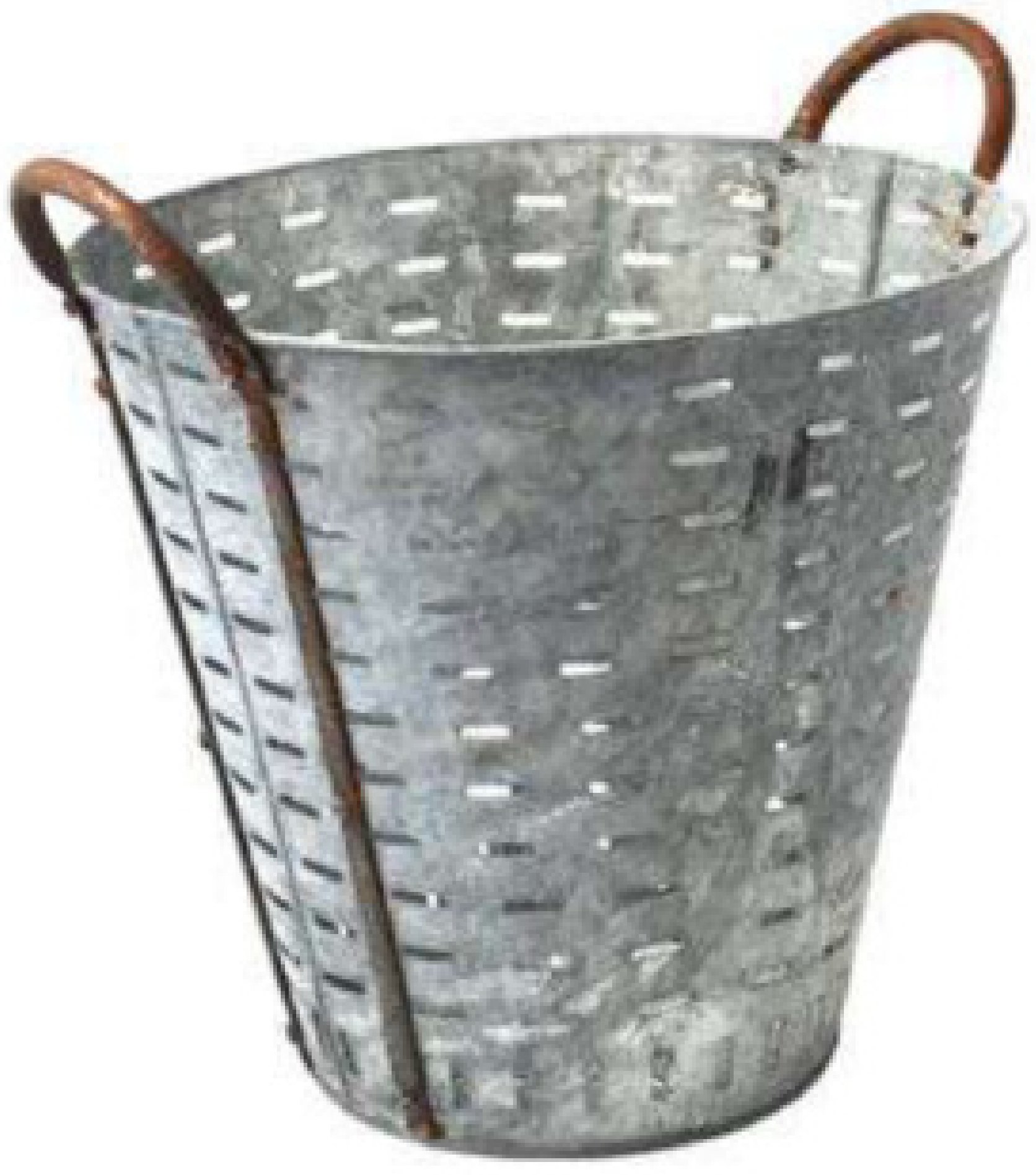
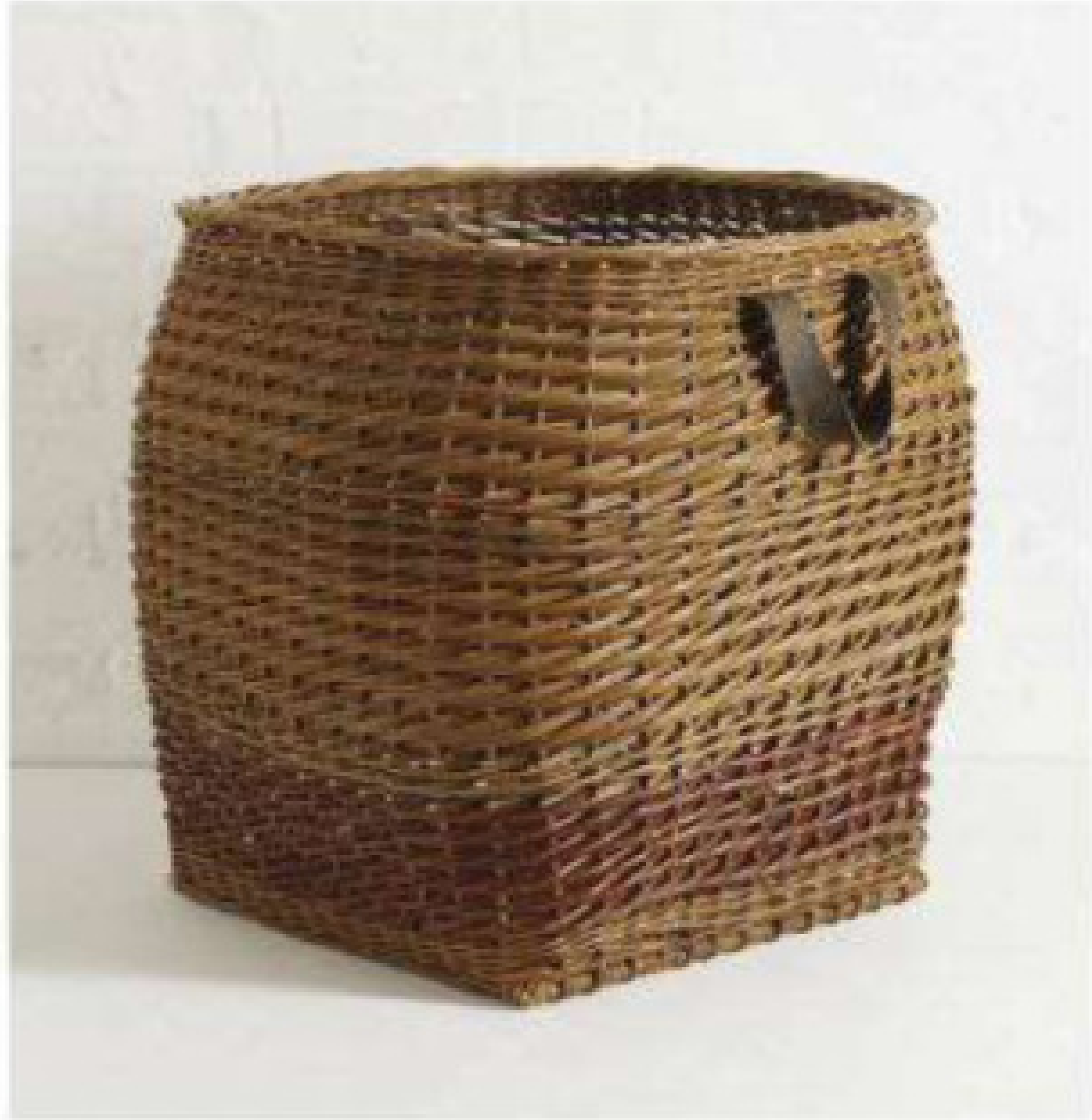
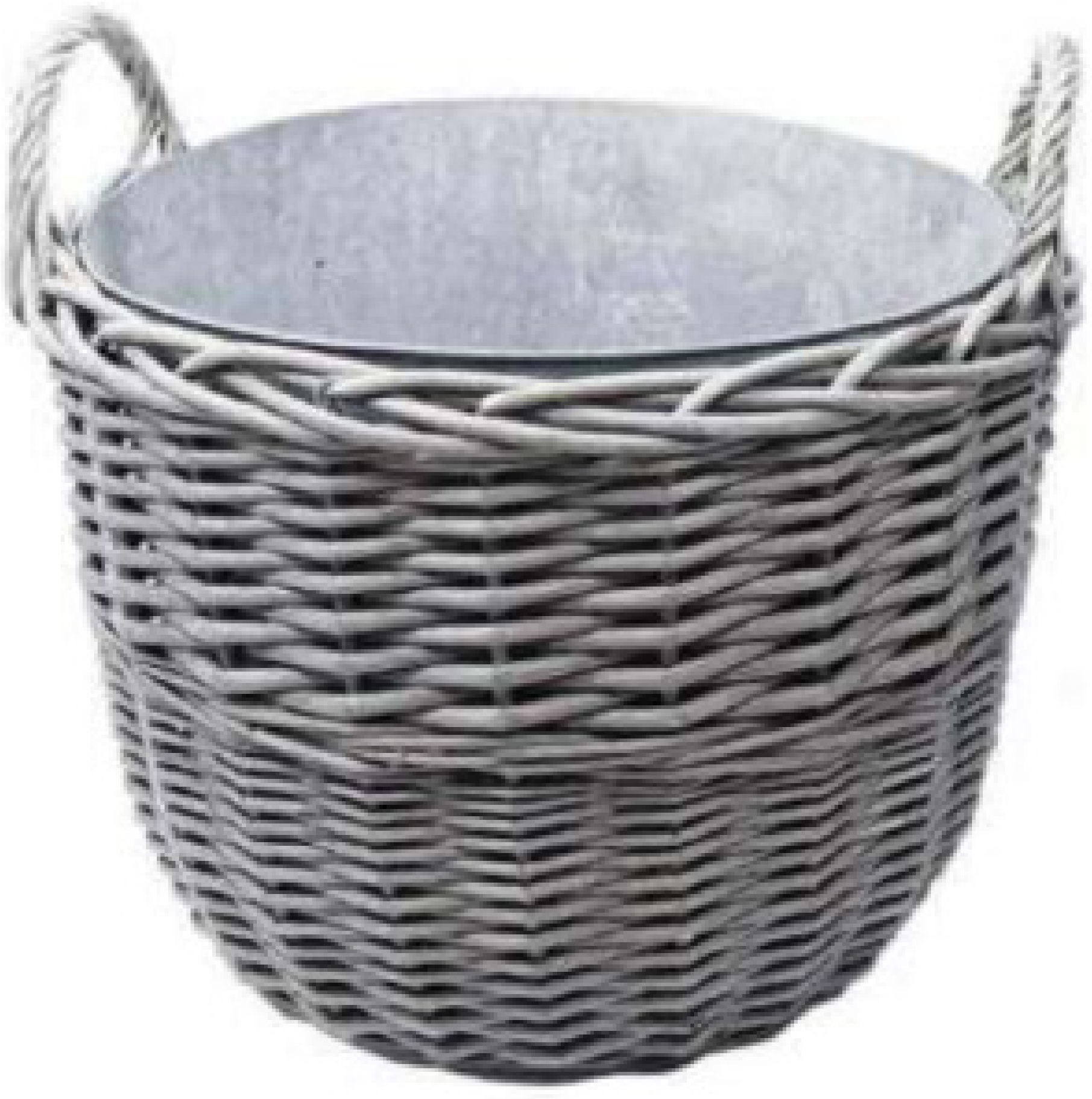


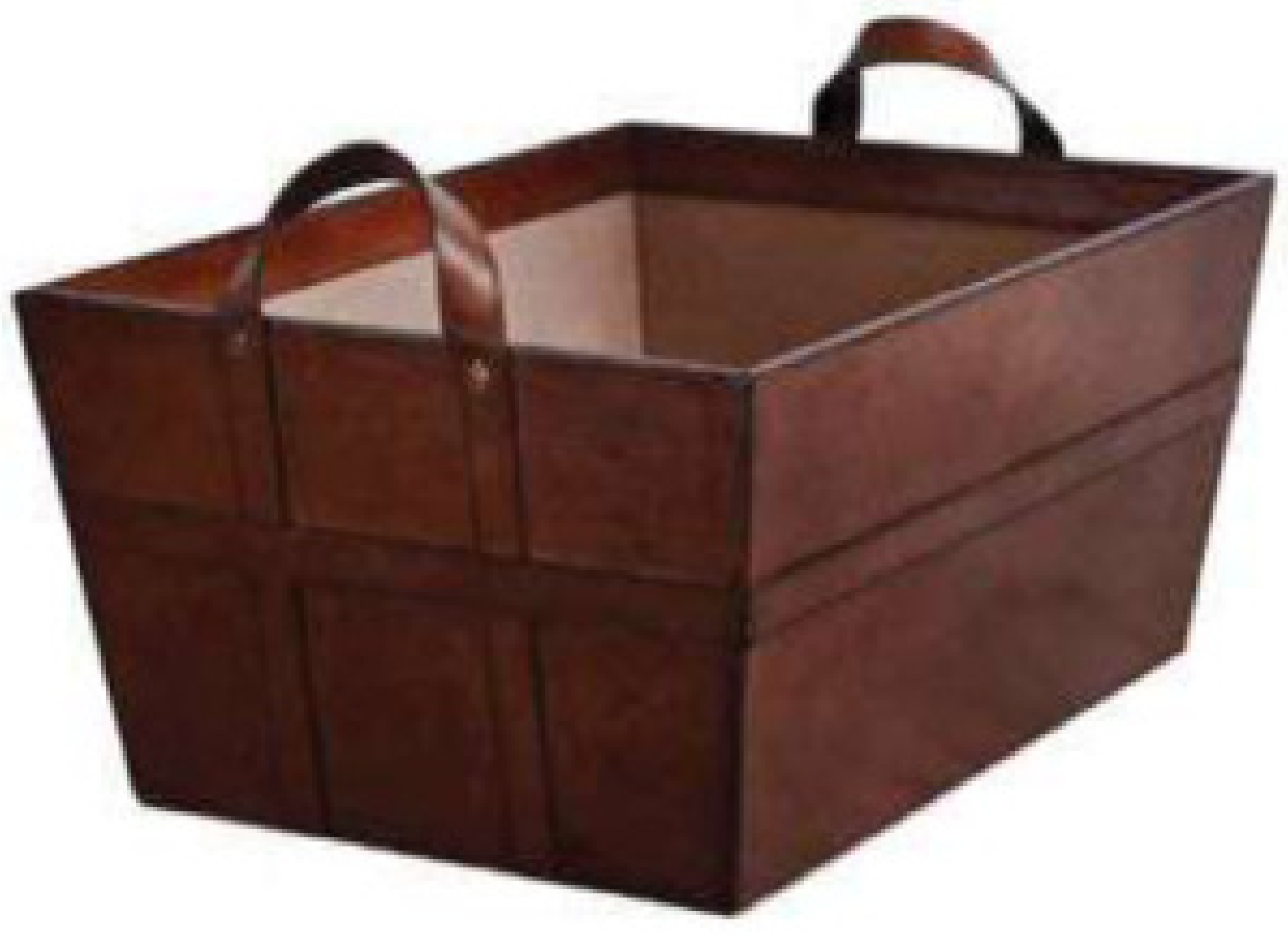
VINTAGE APPEAL
Olive Bucket,
£38, Hen & Hammock,
01844 217060, henandhammock.co.uk



STYLISH WEAVE
Willow Log Basket by Annemarie O'Sullivan,
£530, The New Craftsmen,
020 7148 3190, thenewcraftsmen.com



STRONG LINING
Zinc Lined Willow Basket (Large),
£94, Rowen & Wren,
rowenandwren.co.uk



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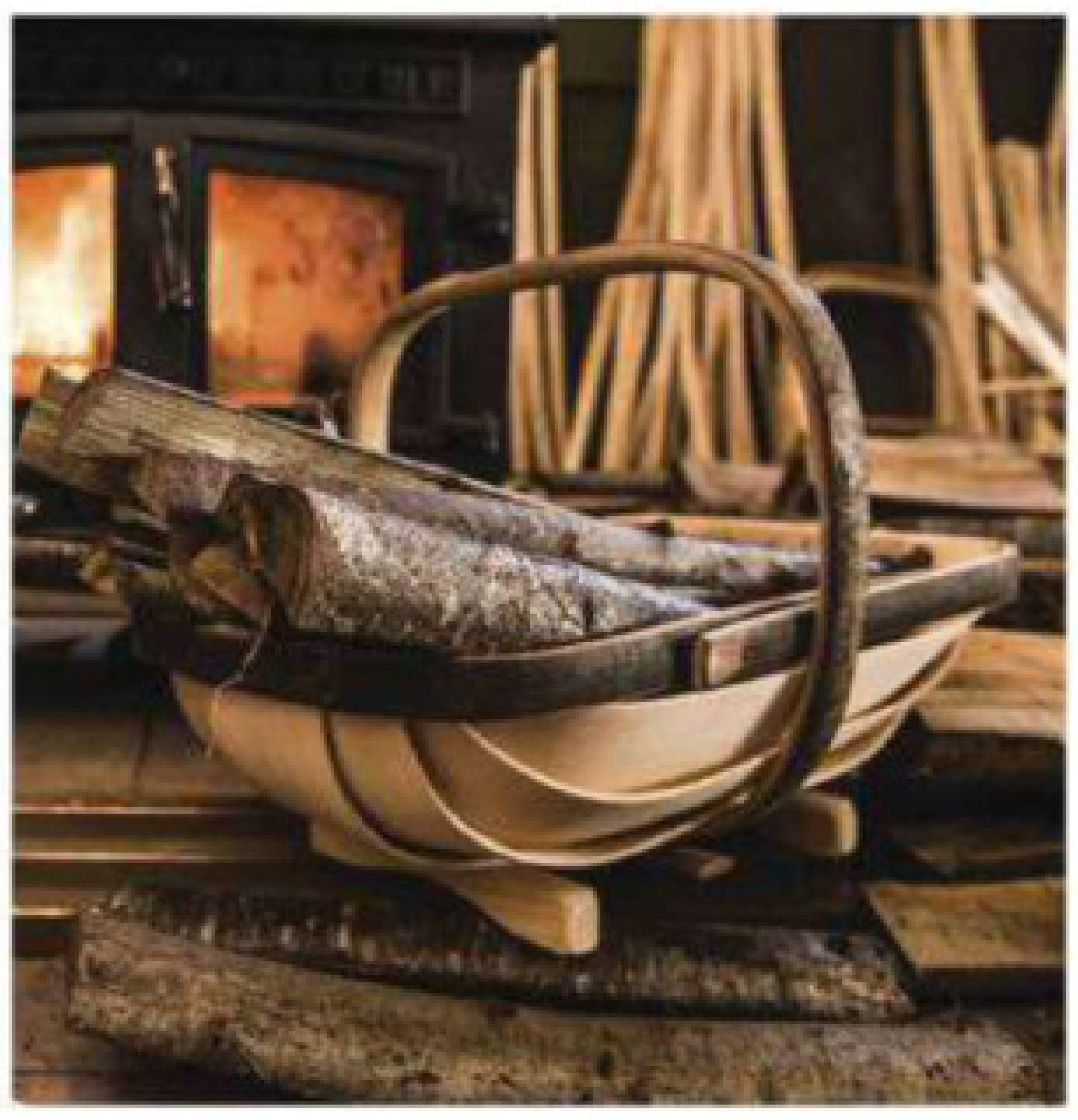
Leather Log and Wood Basket,
£187.50, Candle and Blue,
01284 624078, candleandblue.co.uk



RUSTIC
Royal Sussex Traditional Log Trug,
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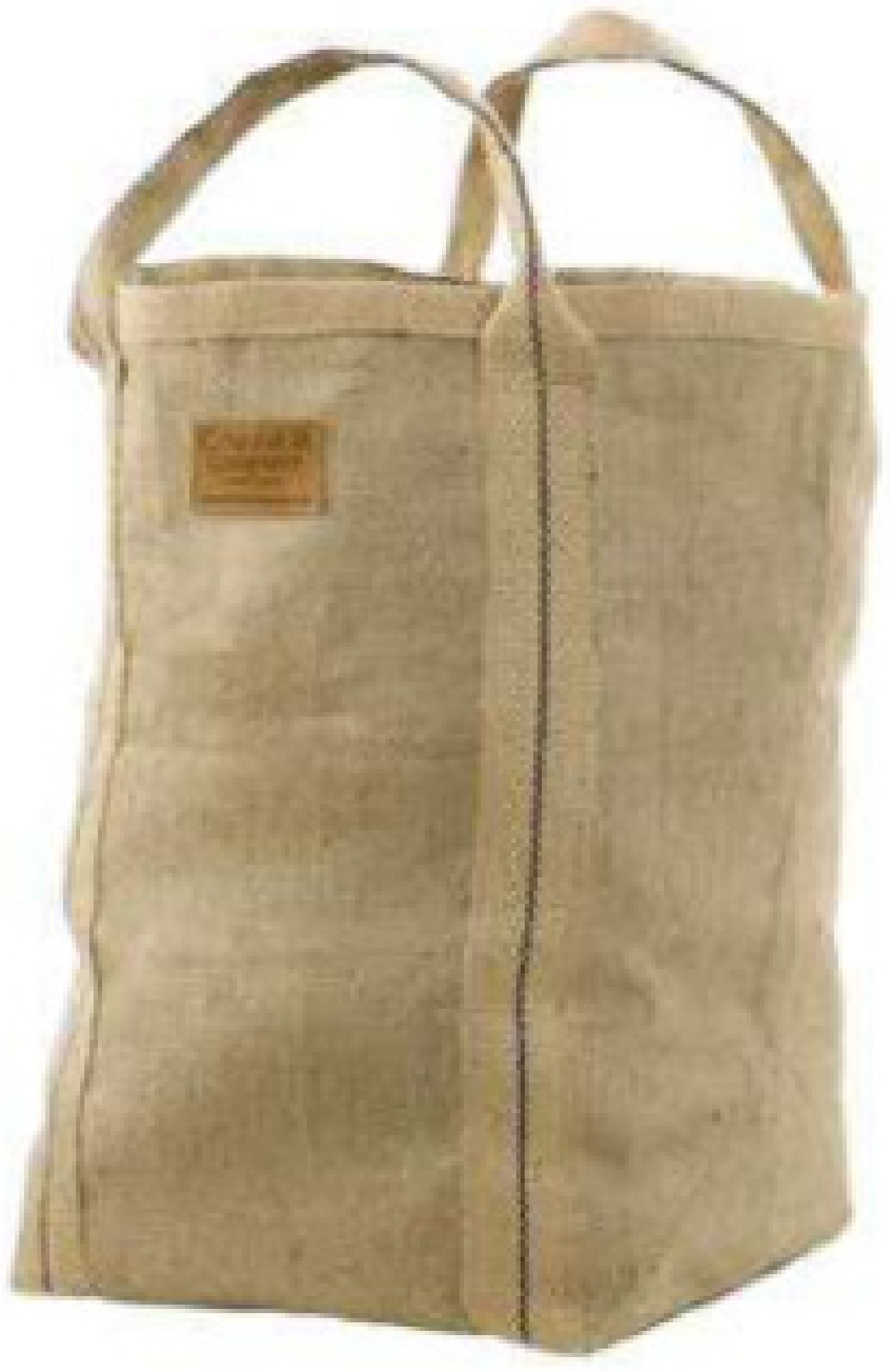
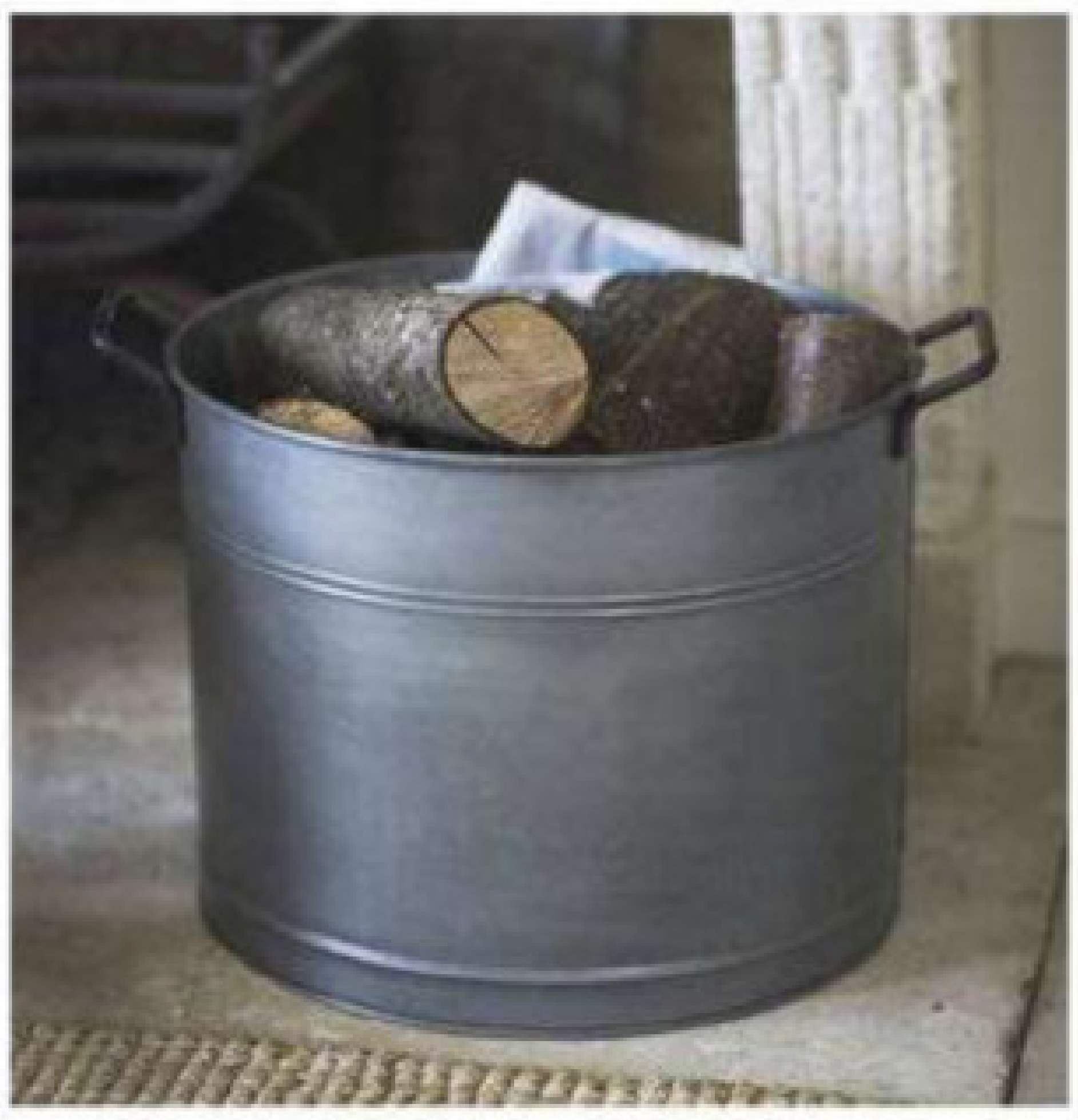
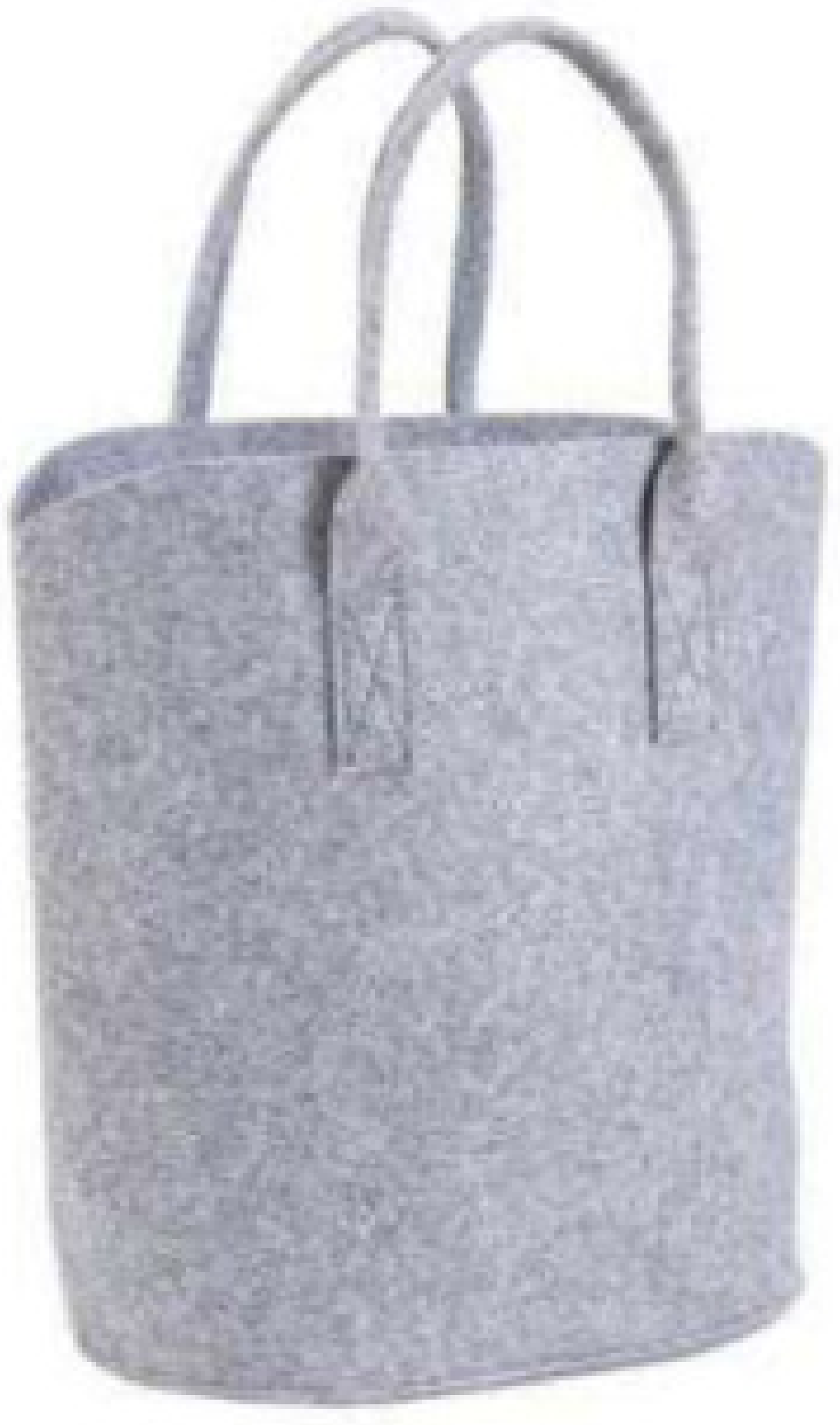


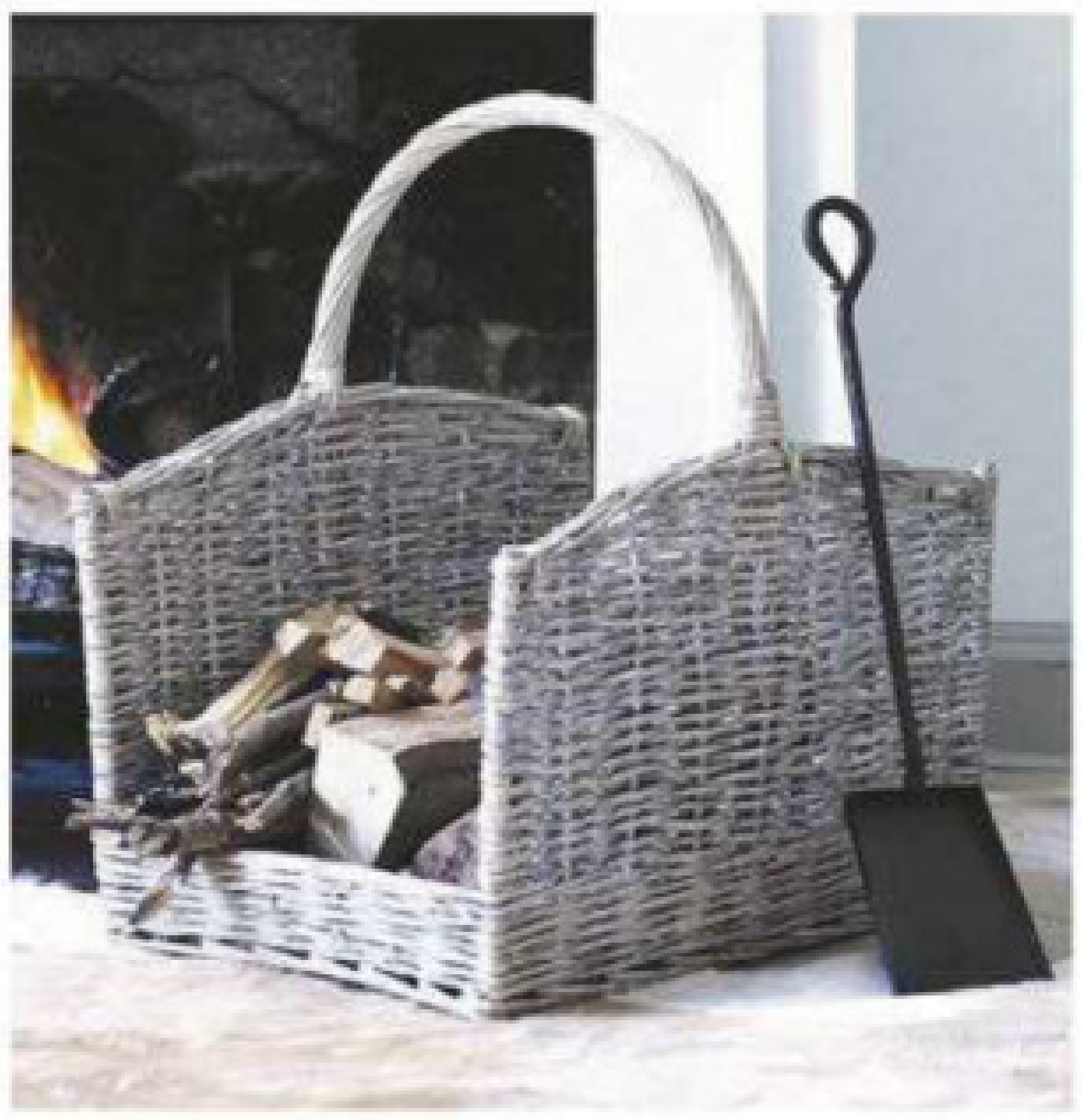
WHAT A CARRY ON
Log Bag,
£45, Carrier company,
01328 820699, carriercompany.co.uk



INDUSTRIAL
Medium Galvanised Log Bucket,
£50, Pretty Maison,
01353 665141, prettymaison.co.uk



LITTLE AND LIGHT
Light Grey Felt Basket,
£25, Nordic House,
01872 223220, nordichouse.co.uk



ELEGANT
Willow Log Carrier,
£60, Cox & Cox,
0330 333 2123, coxandcox.co.uk

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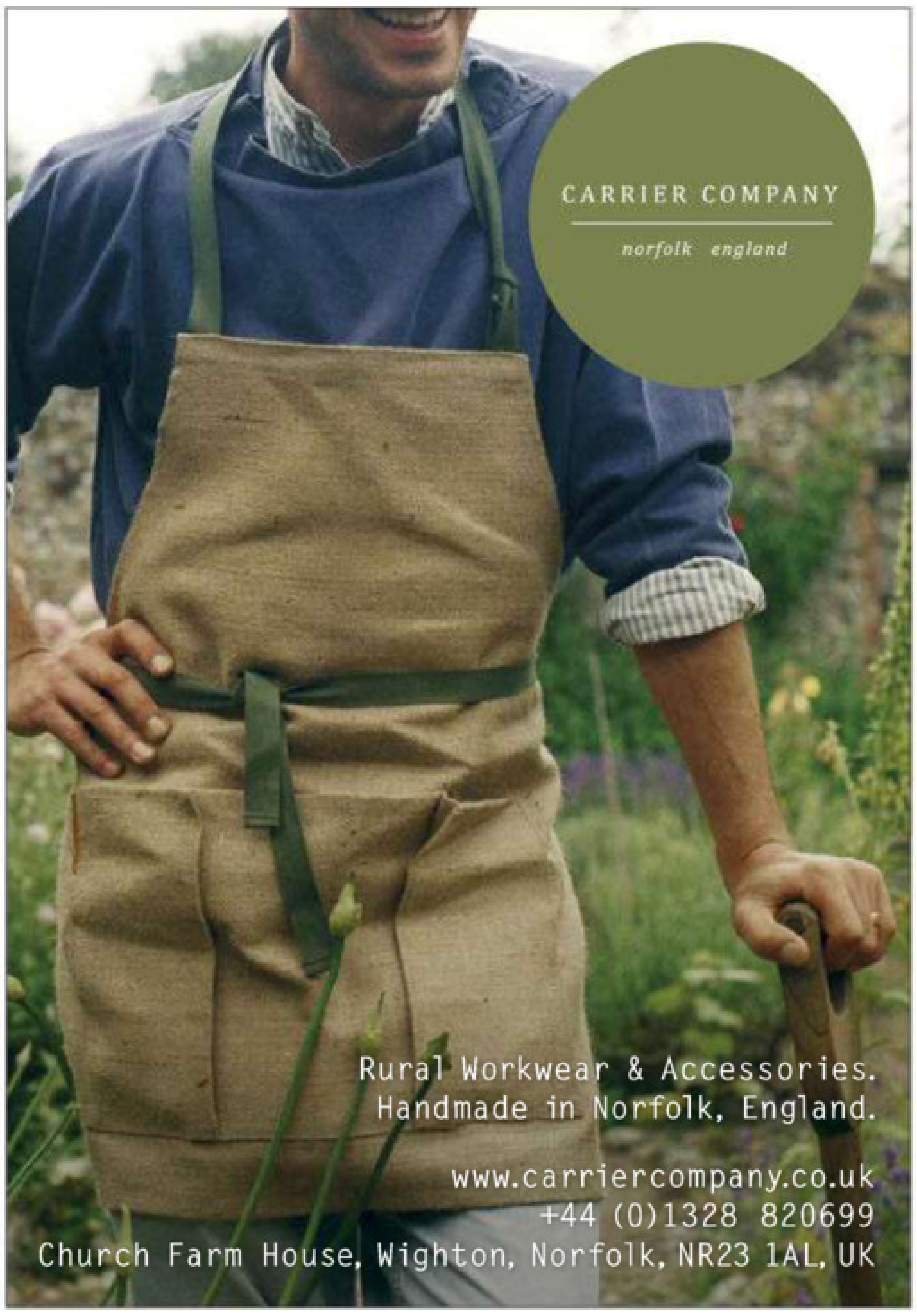

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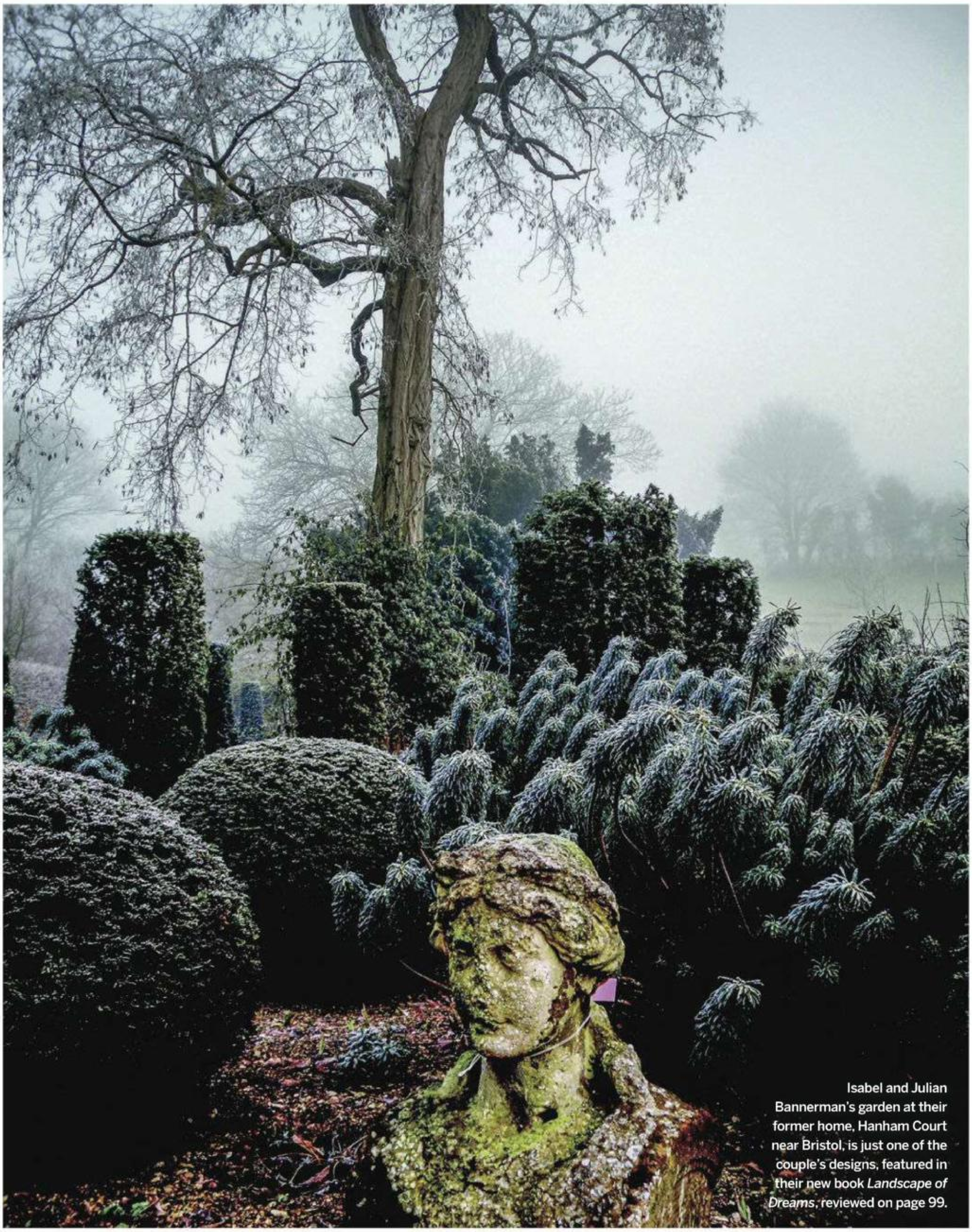
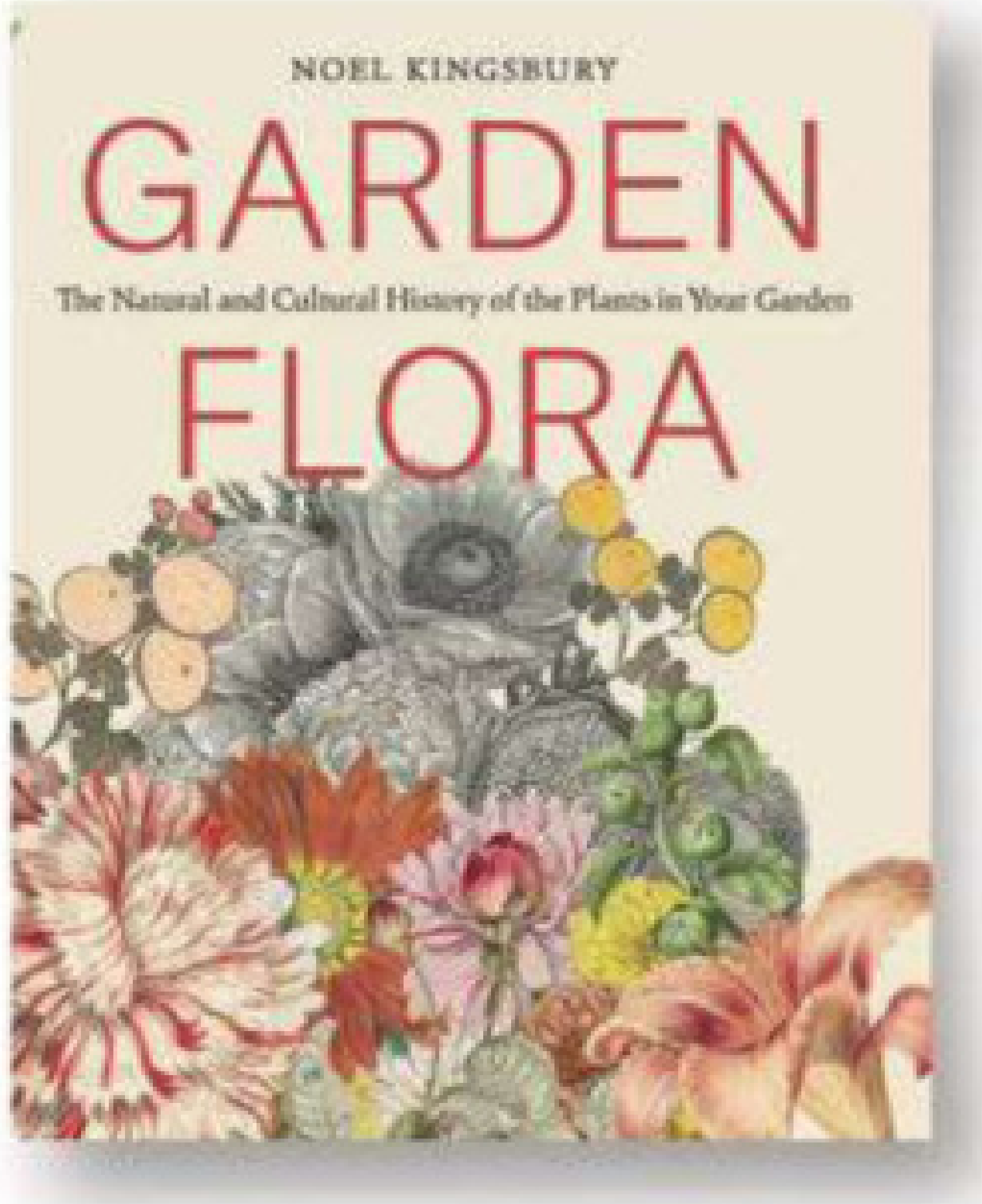


Isabel and Julian Bannerman's garden at their former home, Hanham Court near Bristol, is just one of the couple's designs, featured in their new book *Landscape of Dreams*, reviewed on page 99.

SABEL AND JULIAN BANNERMAN AND DUNSTAN BAKER 2016

Book reviews



GARDEN FLORA: THE NATURAL AND CULTURAL HISTORY OF THE PLANTS IN YOUR GARDEN
by Noël Kingsbury

Timber Press, £29.95
ISBN 978-1604695656

Biographies of some of the most popular garden plants, charting their history plus fascinating facts about them.

Reviewer Stephanie Donaldson is a garden writer.

The introduction to this book comes with a 'Read this First' instruction, which does tend to bring out my rebellious side and have me skipping to the next section. However, with a review to write, I did as I was told and am glad I did, as it proved to be an intensive course in the botanical terminology that is used throughout the book. Some terms were familiar; some, such as 'competitive perennials' (plants that clone themselves through rhizomes, stolons or shoots from shallow roots), were new to me. I also discovered many interesting facts, including, a barren scree is a rich habitat because of the avalanches which have kept it tree-free, allowing its 'tall-herb flora' (including many familiar garden plants) to be fed by nutrient-rich underground water. I now have a better understanding and appreciation of these rocky slopes.

Aside from the introduction, this is not a book that requires systematic reading – it can be dipped into a plant at a time whenever you fancy discovering more about the origin and habitat of a favourite flower, or want to get a better understanding of how it will grow in your garden. The descriptive terminology helps with plant choice: a plant that is a 'short-lived pioneer' will grow and flower rapidly, while 'forest floor stress tolerators', such as epimediums, will make good plants for dry shade.

Garden Flora is also a rich source of amusing botanical trivia with which to entertain gardening friends. Who knew that pompom dahlias were named for their resemblance to the decorative topknot on French sailors' hats? Or that snakeshead fritillaries had other unflattering common names, including 'Madam Ugly' and 'Sullen Lady'.

All in all, this book is richly illustrated and makes an interesting and informative read.

PLANT: EXPLORING THE BOTANICAL WORLD
by Phaidon editors

Phaidon, £39.95
ISBN 978-0714871486

A dazzling collection of more than 300 images of plants that brings the evolution of botanical art right into the 21st century.

Reviewer Anna Pavord is a garden writer.

Books showcasing botanical art are often arranged in chronological order, starting perhaps with the gorgeous lilies of the Santorini fresco (about 1500BC) and working through medieval herbals to the dazzling array of plant portraits that emerged from the Renaissance onwards. You'll find all these in *Plant*, but, as the publisher explains, the artworks 'have been arranged in pairs to highlight interesting comparisons and contrasts'. So here, the convolvulus that drifts down a page of the *Carrara Herbal* (c1390) is set opposite a morning glory (2014) made from painted wood by the Japanese artist, Yoshihiro Suda.

Each image occupies a full page, with long captions underneath. No author is credited, though botanist Dr James Compton has written a wonderfully cogent introduction to the book, setting the whole subject of botanical art in context. Some of the best pairings occur when an eastern image of a plant is set alongside a western one, as with the loofahs (*Luffa aegyptiaca*). We see the Japanese artist, Kogyo Tsukioka's delicate rendering on the left (c1900), full of space, while on the right is a copper engraving made for a Spanish herbal of 1640 with the loofah expanding fatly to fill every inch of the frame, together with its flower and twirling tendrils.

Almost a quarter of the images chosen for the book have been made in the past 15 years. This alone was a good reason to abandon chronology. Modern botanical art seems to rely quite heavily on SEM techniques, digitally coloured images taken from a scanning electron microscope. A seed is transformed into a sea anemone, swirling with curved tentacles. Alongside old favourites, such as Redoute and Mary Delany, there is much here that is both unfamiliar and arresting. It is an extraordinary collection.

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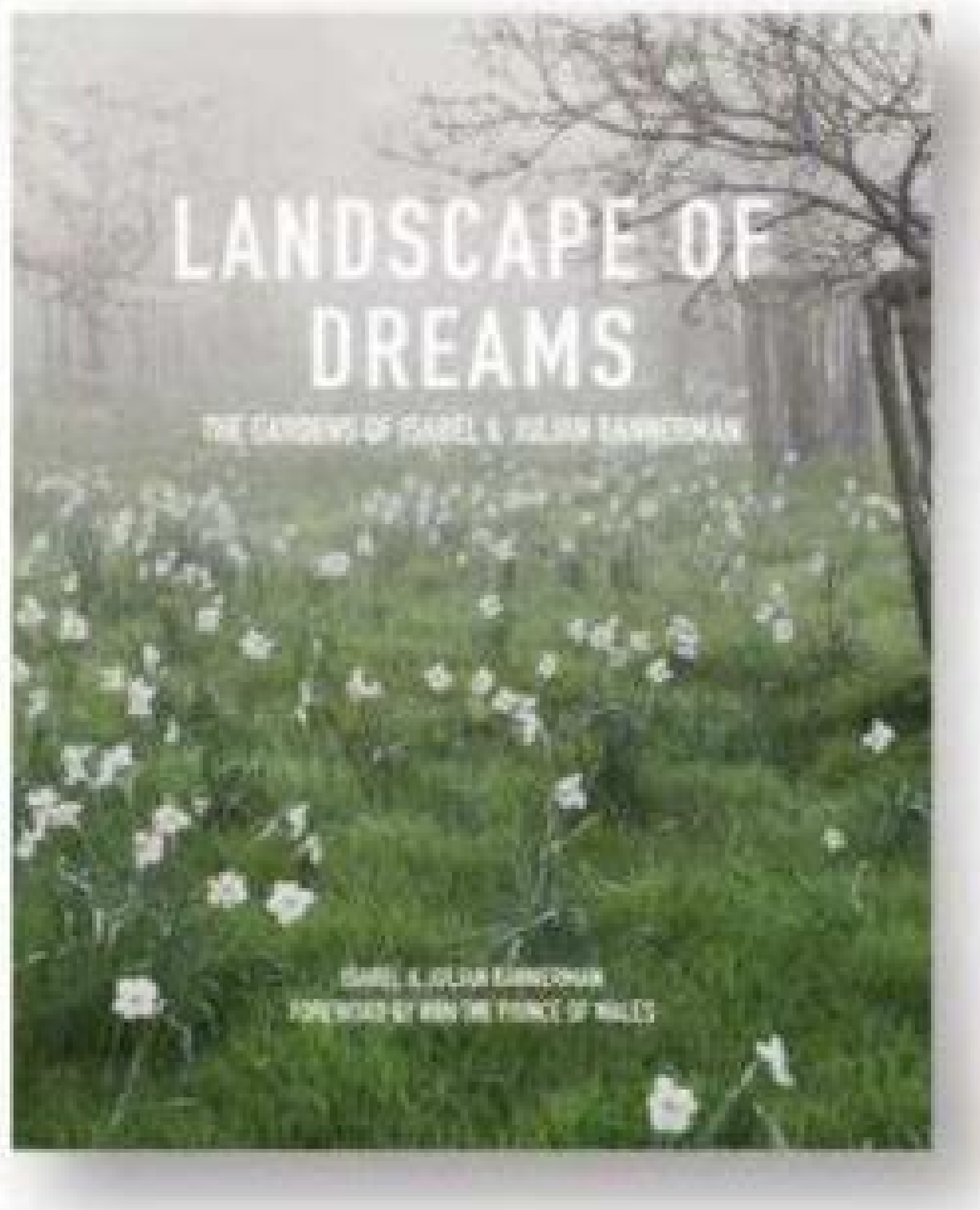
LANDSCAPE OF DREAMS
THE GARDENS OF ISABEL & JULIAN BANNERMAN
ISABEL & JULIAN BANNERMAN
FOREWORD BY HRH THE PRINCE OF WALES

LANDSCAPE OF DREAMS: THE GARDENS OF ISABEL AND JULIAN BANNERMAN

by Isabel and Julian Bannerman

Pimpernel Press, £50
ISBN 978-1910258606

An insight into the creative processes and collaborations that drive the eclectic design projects of Isabel and Julian Bannerman.

Reviewer Annie Gatti is a garden writer and editor.

In the foreword to this lavishly illustrated book, HRH The Prince of Wales, for whom Isabel and Julian Bannerman created the celebrated stumpery at Highgrove, speaks of his gratitude for having experienced the 'Bannerman touch'. This book, a personal account of the couple's key design projects, builds up a picture, both in words and images, of what this special touch involves: sizzling creativity, romantic planting, and, above all, a passion for green oak, rustic buildings, follies, ruins, arches and obelisks.

Most of the featured projects are in the UK, for clients who have deep pockets and commitment to their gardens. Some, such as the sweet chestnut henge at the Chilterns home of Victoria and the late Paul Getty, are single constructions; others require interventions across the whole property.

The lively accounts are part historical – the Bannermans relish the exhaustive research that is the starting point for many of these designs – and part a paean to the teams of stone masons, wood workers, artists, architects and landscapers they have acquired. The couple are attracted to the works of 'offbeat visionaries' and they show, through their rich selection of sketches, plans, paintings and photos, their debt to such figures as John Aubrey, Inigo Jones and Thomas Wright. Detailed captions of plant combinations, and of roses that spill over and clamber in glorious profusion, allows those with modest-sized gardens to take home ideas.

From a design point of view, perhaps the most revealing account is that of the Manhattan 9/11 Memorial garden where officialdom clearly diluted their vision for the space. The book concludes with chapters on their own gardens at Hanham Court and Trematon Castle, luminous examples of the kind of 'forgotten' gardening they embrace.

IAN MILLER
THE SCYTHING HANDBOOK

THE SCYTHING HANDBOOK: LEARN HOW TO CUT GRASS, MOW MEADOWS AND HARVEST GRAIN BY HAND

by Ian Miller

Filbert Press, £14.99
ISBN 978-0993389245

A book that tells you everything you ever wanted to know, and more, about traditional methods of harvesting and haymaking.

Reviewer Rory Dusoir is a Kew-trained gardener and writer.

Author Ian Miller has applied the same diligence to researching and writing *The Scything Handbook* that he has evidently applied to the craft of using and maintaining a scythe. Years of passion have gone into this elegant little book. Using a scythe is clearly quite a central part of the author's life, and when the book briefly forays into associated subjects, such as alternative agriculture, self-awareness and ecology, we get an understanding of why this is so.

Let us take it as read that the book tells you just about everything a book possibly can about the use of a scythe and very probably a lot more than you need to know about its history and manufacture. The author's account of pre-industrial scythe manufacturing methods in particular is strangely gripping and glowing with detail. But it is really the author's engagement with the subject that makes this book quite compellingly readable.

Whether he has succeeded in elevating scything to anything more than an esoteric hobby is a moot point. Nostalgia for the elegant simplicity of older technologies is common and infectious (as is the mistrust we can attach to technological innovation) and there is no doubt that a great deal was lost as well as gained through the mechanisation and intensification of farming. But the author's dream that the scythe may somehow replace the tractor seems remote and fanciful. Even the pre-historic Greeks emerged with myths that bespoke their guilt-laden mistrust of technological innovation, imagining a pre-agricultural golden age when toil was necessary.

Nevertheless, this book has valid things to say about modern farming and modern life and is well worth picking up even if you will never pick up a scythe.

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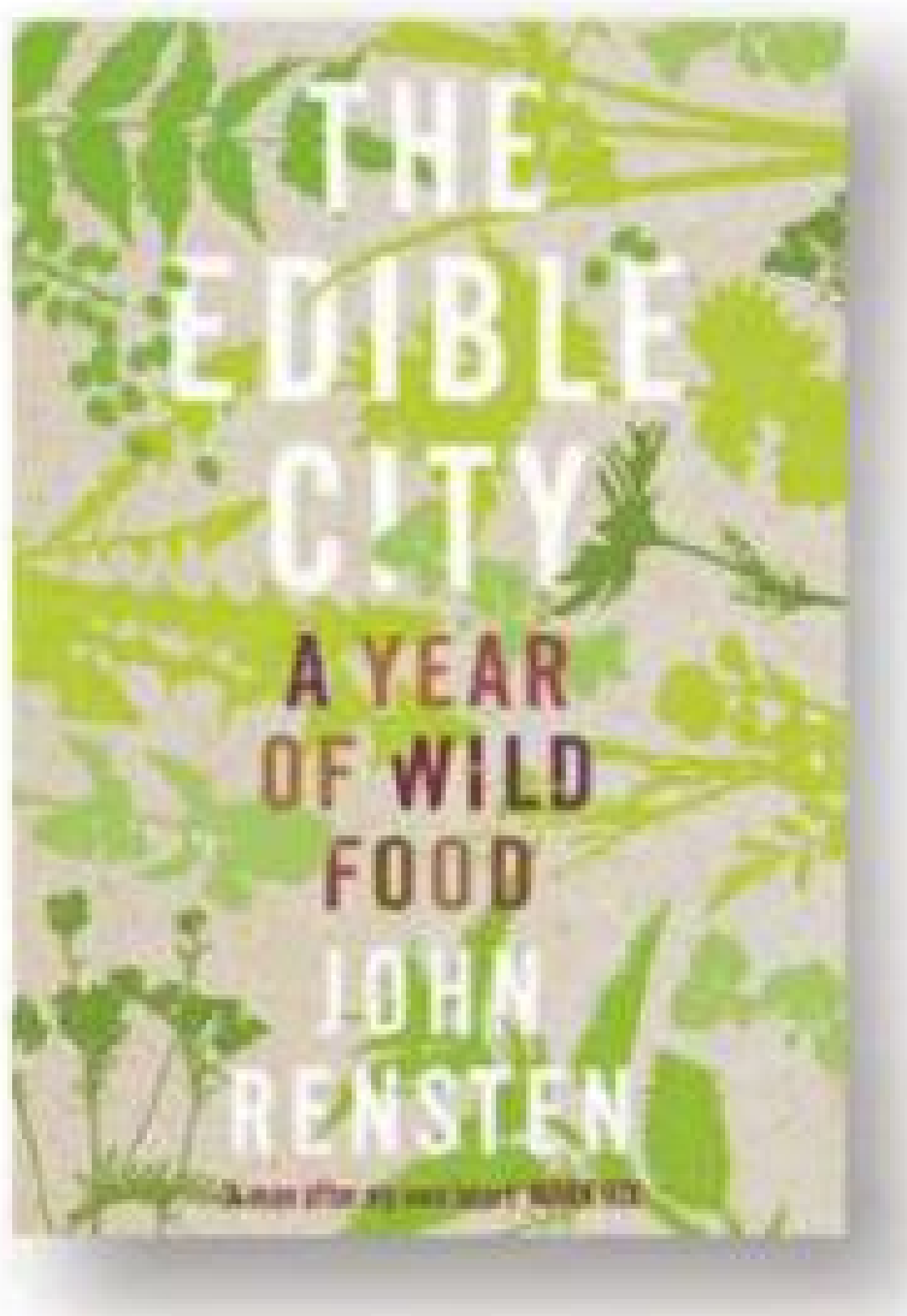
Book reviews



THE EDIBLE CITY: A YEAR OF WILD FOOD
by John Rensten

Boxtree, £12.99
ISBN 978-0752266138

An account of an urban forager's year that will help you cook up meals from ingredients freely found on an overgrown street corner.

Reviewer Andy Hamilton is a forager, writer and brewer.

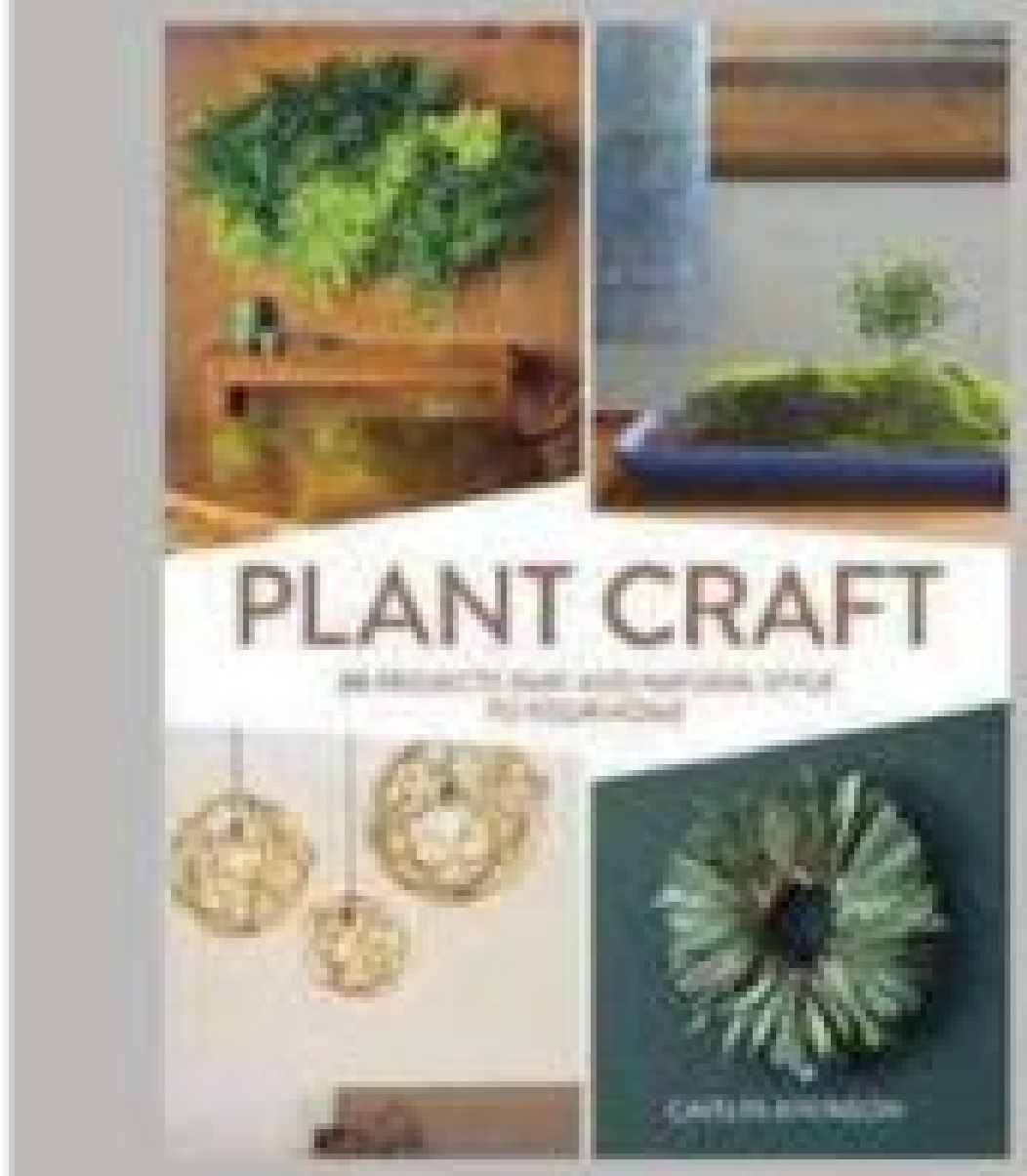
You can almost see urban forager John Rensten's neurons firing off in all directions as you read his first book *The Edible City*. He is so thorough in his approach; he's already thought of any questions that might arise from reading his text and, before they are asked, he's answered them. For example, he provides a calendar of what to forage for and when, details the basics of plant ID, covering poisonous lookalikes, and he even covers the dangers of dog poo and wee, a must when talking about foraging in urban parks.

The book is set out in diary format and it gives an insight into Rensten's thoughts (and a touch of his family life), as he forages his way around London and beyond. Yet the plants he chooses to cover are ones that I am familiar with in Bristol and that I've foraged for across the British Isles. What is very clever with this format is that we get a deeper understanding of these plants as Rensten will forage for the same plants at different times throughout the year, looking for different characteristics. For example, he'll use the leaves of wild chervil until late spring then he'll move on to eating the stems, the flowers, then finally the seeds. He treats the plant how a chef might approach his produce, finding the flavours that change throughout the year. This is coupled with some of Rensten's own recipes and, having run a successful restaurant, they are ones that wouldn't go amiss on a gastro menu, but have a simplicity that can easily be reproduced.

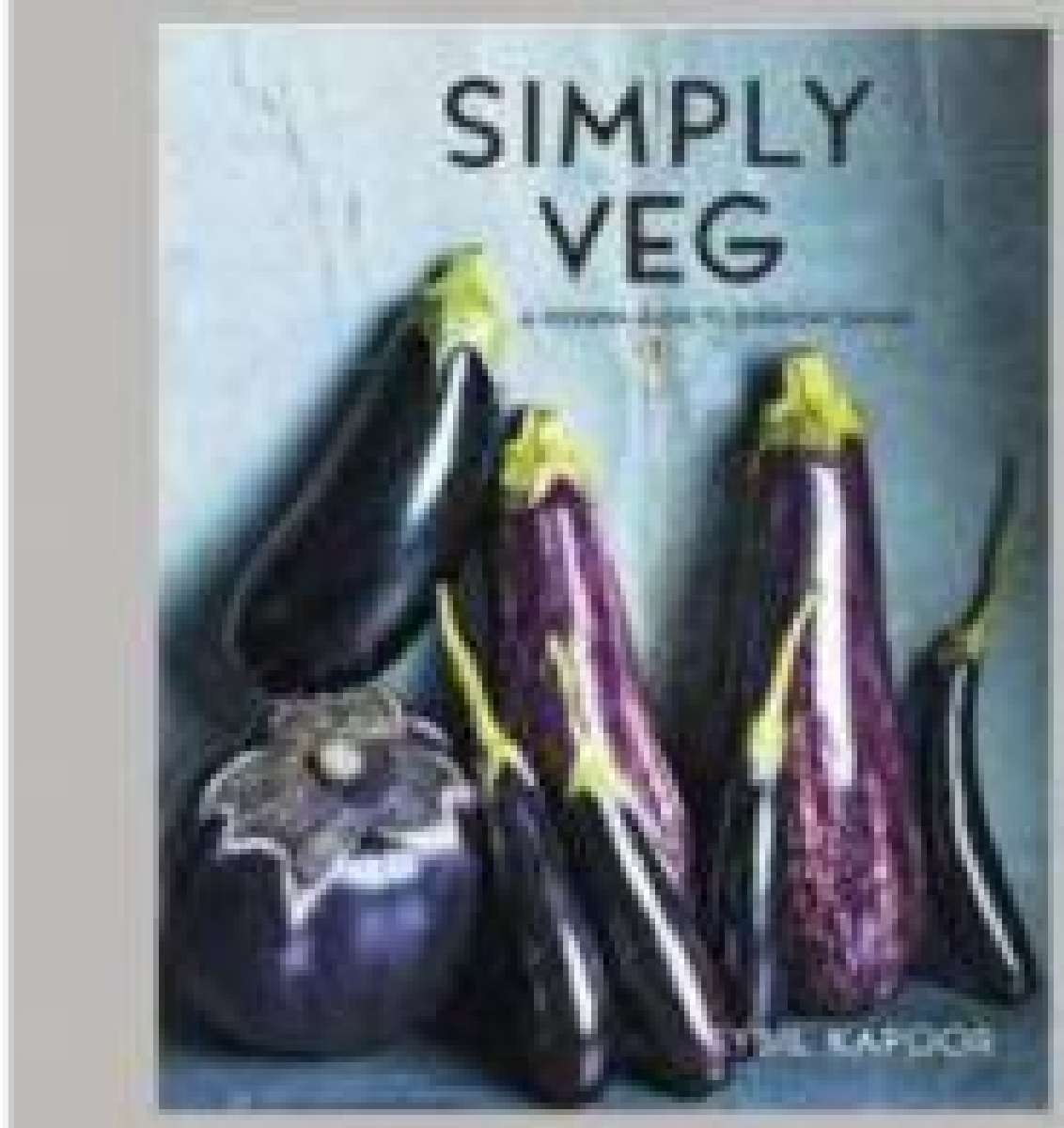
Rensten's book will appeal to urbanites and beyond. Think of it as a modern version of the 1970s bestseller *The Country Diary of an Edwardian Lady*, only a bit more 'street'. I can't imagine Edith Holden ever hanging off a cliff by her fingertips, although perhaps she just didn't tell us that bit.

Other books

Five more of the best new books this month, with everything from the love life of plants to the work ethics of worms

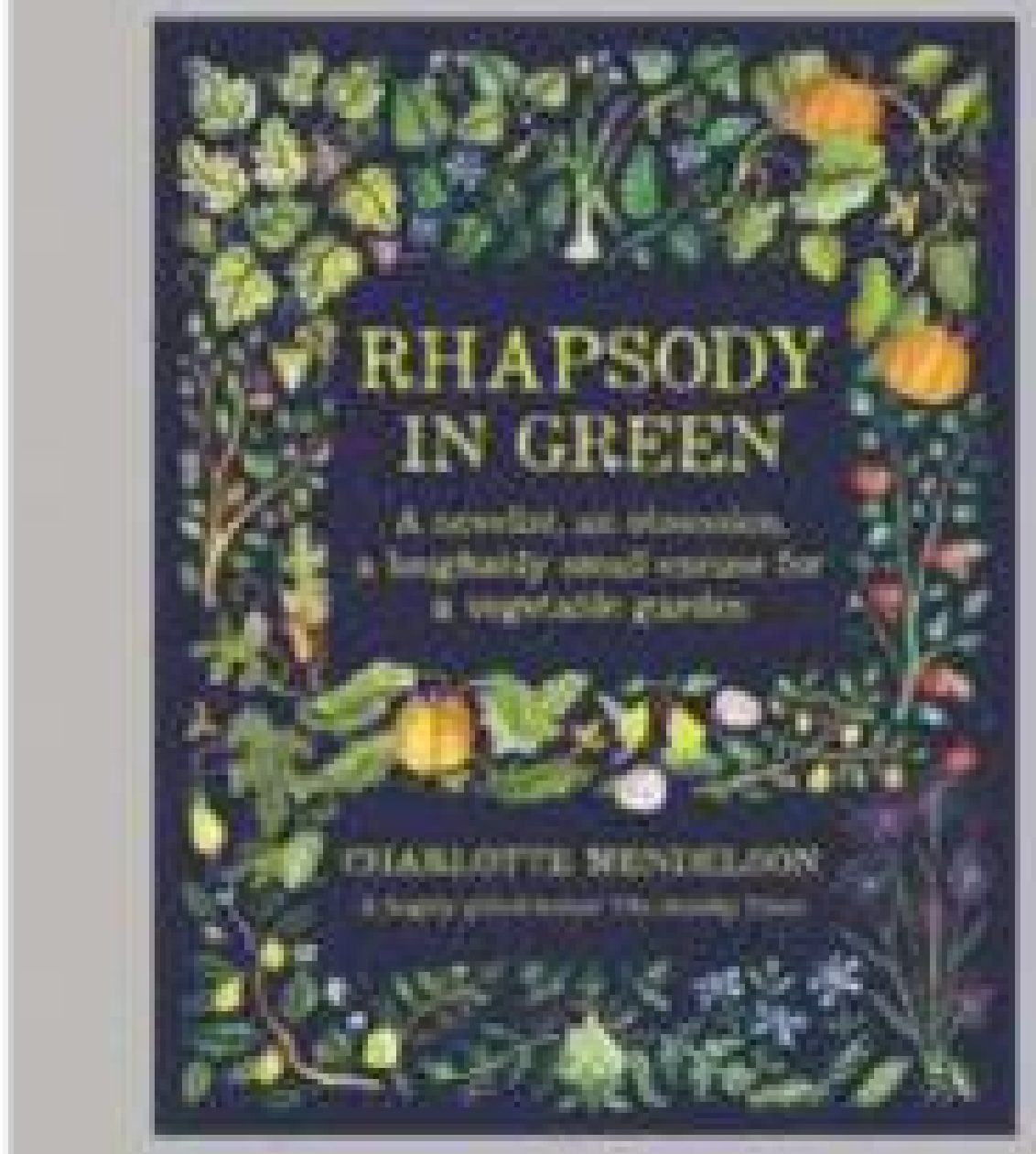


PLANT CRAFT
by Caitlin Atkinson
Timber Press, £17.99
ISBN 978-1604696493
Thirty creative projects, with illustrated step-by-step instructions designed to help you bring a touch of natural style to your home.

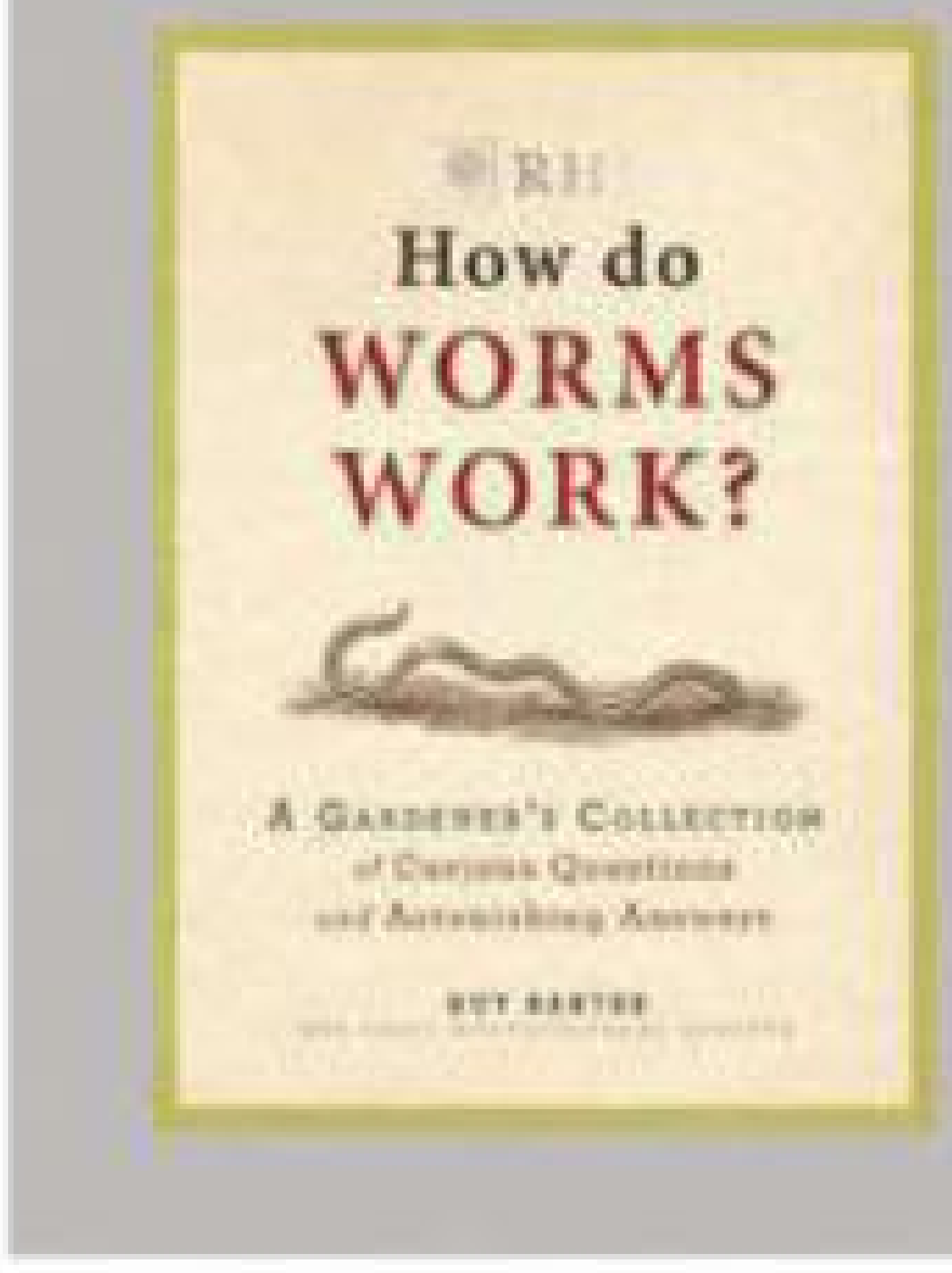


SIMPLY VEG
by Sybil Kapoor
Pavilion Books, £17.99
ISBN 978-1910904374
Tasty, seasonal dishes that celebrate the versatility and flavour of home-grown vegetables from the doyenne of delicious everday cooking.

PLANT LOVE
by Michael Allaby
Filbert Press, £14.99
ISBN 978-0993389221
Delve into the world of botanical sex and discover the techniques used by plants to enter into unseemly liaisons to reproduce and survive.



RHAPSODY IN GREEN
by Charlotte Mendelson
Kyle Books, £16.99
ISBN 978-0857833105
Novelist Charlotte Mendelson takes us through her gardening year documenting the highs and lows of owning a small urban allotment.


RHS
How do WORMS WORK?
A Gardener's Collection of Curious Questions and Astonishing Answers
GUY BARTER

RHS HOW DO WORMS WORK?
by Guy Barter
Mitchell Beazley, £14.99
ISBN 978-1784722289
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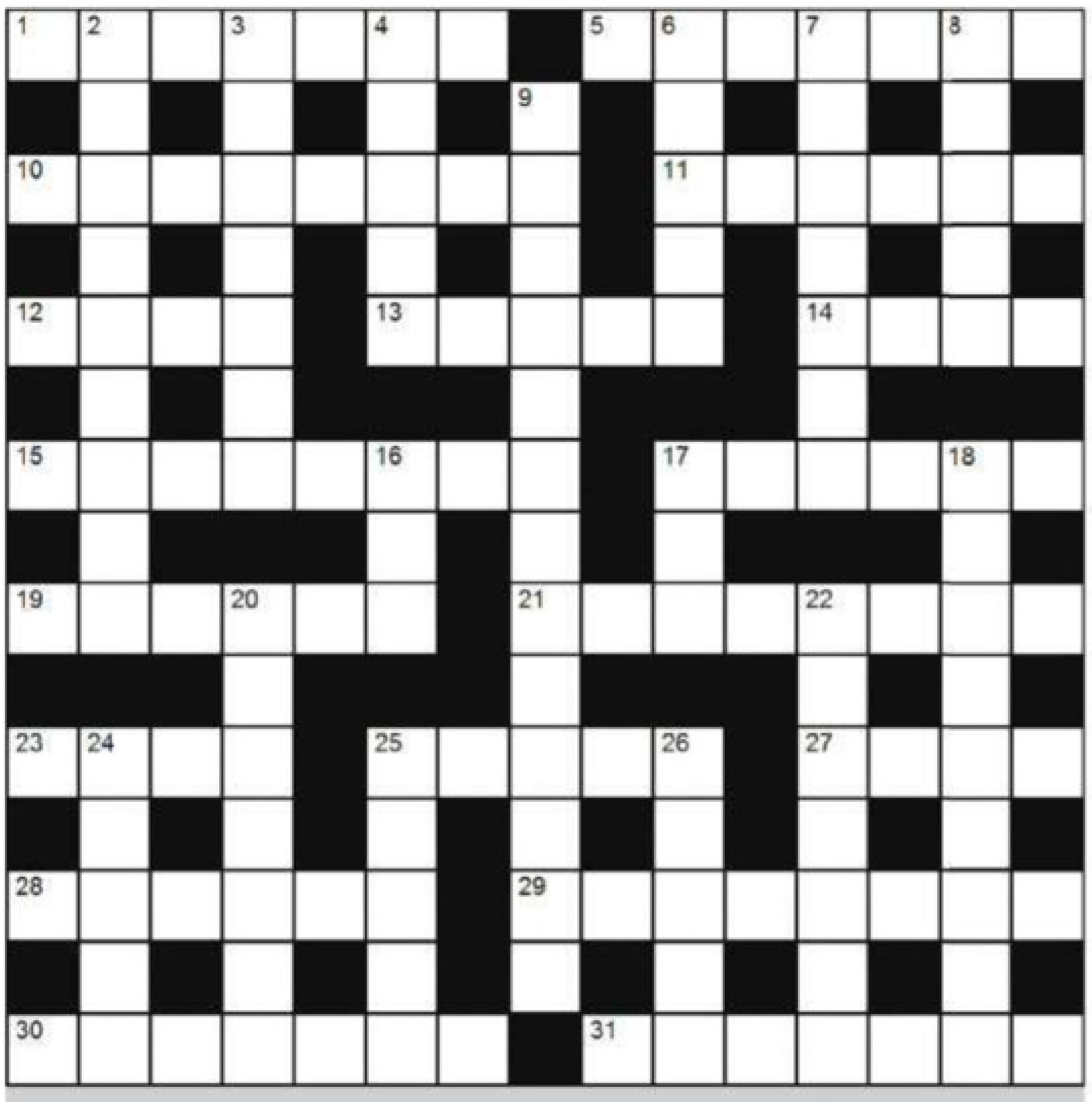

ACROSS

1 Prickly pear genus – 'Utopian' variety (7)
5 Salad plant variety that's frozen in the main? (7)
10 *Dicksonia* possibly interferes badly – is removed (4,4)
11 Stolon found in *Brunnera* (6)
12 Tall, white narcissus initially grown under Lent lilies (4)
13 The willow genus's crooked axils (5)
14 A *Petunia* Surfinia series – Japanese sport (4)
15 Like Stephen Lacey, one who likes a good plot? (8)
17 Shingle, say, left after burial site (6)
19 Gardener De Thame's first pink-flowering heuchera (6)
21 Crushes cucurbits (8)
23 Crooked, like *Agrostis* grass? (4)
25 Like a sickly plant, or like one that's overwhelming? (5)
27 Their shells may deter slugs, for example, on tops of green saxifrages (4)
28 A lot of snowdrops lost at sea? (6)
29 Fruit used as a vegetable – that's cool! (8)
30 The sundew genus, 'Red Rosa' maybe? (7)
31 Evergreen *Berberis* relative ... in garden and in arboretum (7)

DOWN

2 Genus of plants also called moss rose – Carol put out one (9)
3 Required to include end of daffodil, having stiff, narrow leaves (7)
4 White astrantias include these sweet spire shrubs (5)
6 The sedge genus – be concerned about ten (5)
7 Genus of plants in *Protea* family named after planthunter Joseph (7)
8 Rhubarb genus gets the man in the drink! (5)
9 Nice, close fern produces flower head (13)
16 A salvia with lavender-blue flowers is half fennel! (3)
17 A tall, bearded iris – 'Wildebeest'? (3)
18 Always envious for a Scots pine, say (9)
20 A salvia with red flowers turning white transform his plot (3,4)
22 As plants with stalks are ... checked? (7)
24 It's a white dwarf rhododendron, duck! (5)
25 Liquid sometimes applied to chestnut and plantain (5)
26 *Agave* relative that flowers annually (5)

SOLUTIONS TO THIS MONTH'S CROSSWORD WILL BE PRINTED NEXT MONTH

OCTOBER'S SOLUTION

ACROSS 1 Cosmos **5** Shamrock **9** Clod **10** Bloom **11** Bulb **12** Apollo **14** Doris Day **15** Abutilon **17** Aerial **19** Toxic **21** Sweet bay **23** Celmisia **25** Pleach **27** Scar **28** Anise **29** Spot **30** Apple Day **31** Sundew.

DOWN 2 Oxlip **3** Mud **4** Subsoil **5** Snowdon **6** Armeria **7** Rubus **8** Colmanara **13** Latex **16** Buttercup **18** Ratte **20** Costard **21** Scarify **22** Express **24** Morel **26** Crowe **29** Sun.

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WIN exclusive preview tickets to Christmas at Kew

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas, as the trees, temples and glasshouses of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, are once again playfully lit for the gardens' seasonal makeover. Now in its fourth year, Christmas at Kew offers visitors the chance to see the world-famous gardens in a fabulous new light, as they follow a mile-long sparkling path for a magical after-dark experience.

This year, you'll enter the winter wonderland between two giant Christmas trees, festooned with ribbons, and then wander beneath unique tree canopies drenched in seasonal colour. Follow the path between a carpet of light, gently swaying like blossom, and you reach the scented Fire Garden – inspired by the Five Gold Rings from The Twelve Days of Christmas – before continuing on towards glittering trees dripping with giant crystals and gazing at colour-changing reeds rising high into the night sky. Just ahead you'll glimpse the Tunnel of Lights, which this year is animated by more than 60,000 lights making patterns and pictures to a festive soundscape.

Don't forget to stop for a Kew karaoke at the Christmas Juke Box before strolling along the fairytale avenue of flora dotted across the Crystal Lawn. Pause at Mistletoe Moment before continuing the woodland walk between larger-than-life clusters of candles. This year, framed by sparkling hedges, the Palm House Pond springs to life with brightly coloured laser beams, fans of light and flickering orbs that dance in time to music inspired by much-loved Christmas classics.

And finally, there's the chance to complete your Christmas treat under the stars with a cup of spiced cider, mulled wine or hot chocolate while the aroma of roasting chestnuts fills the air.

Win tickets

Christmas at Kew opens to the public on 23 November, but one lucky *Gardens Illustrated* reader has the chance to win four tickets to an exclusive preview evening on 22 November. See below to enter.

Terms & Conditions

One reader will win four preview tickets to Christmas at Kew on the evening of 22 November 2016. No cash or date alternative available. Travel and accommodation not included. **Closing date 4 November 2016**. The winner will be chosen at random on 7 November 2016 and informed by email by 9 November 2016.
Full Terms & Conditions can be found at: **raymondgubbay.co.uk/gardensillustrated**

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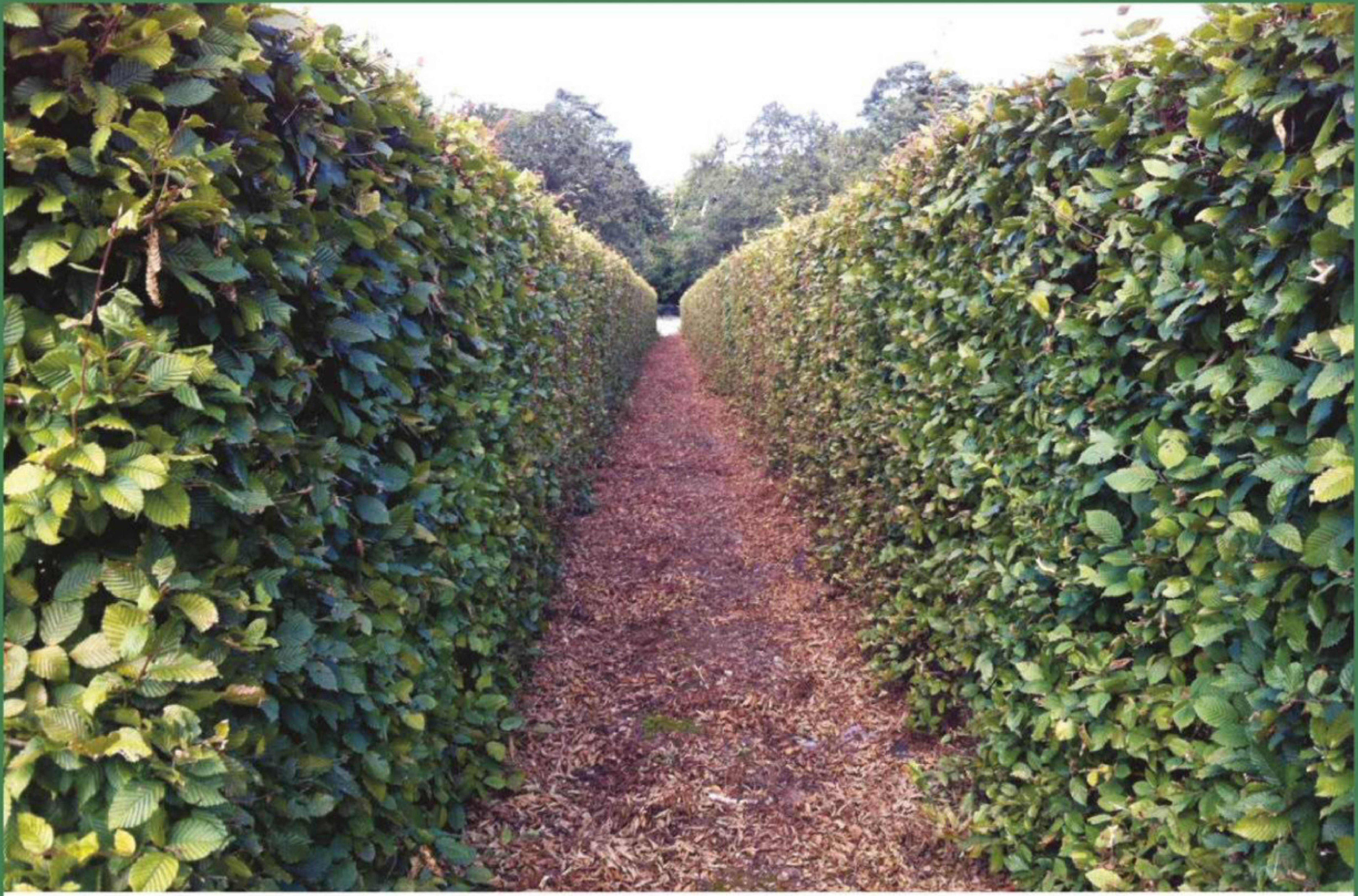

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*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.

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If you've read Jojo Tulloh's advice on growing and eating garlic (see page 72), you'll be keen to get your garlic planted. Expert garlic provider The Garlic Farm is offering 15% off the price of these garlic collections.

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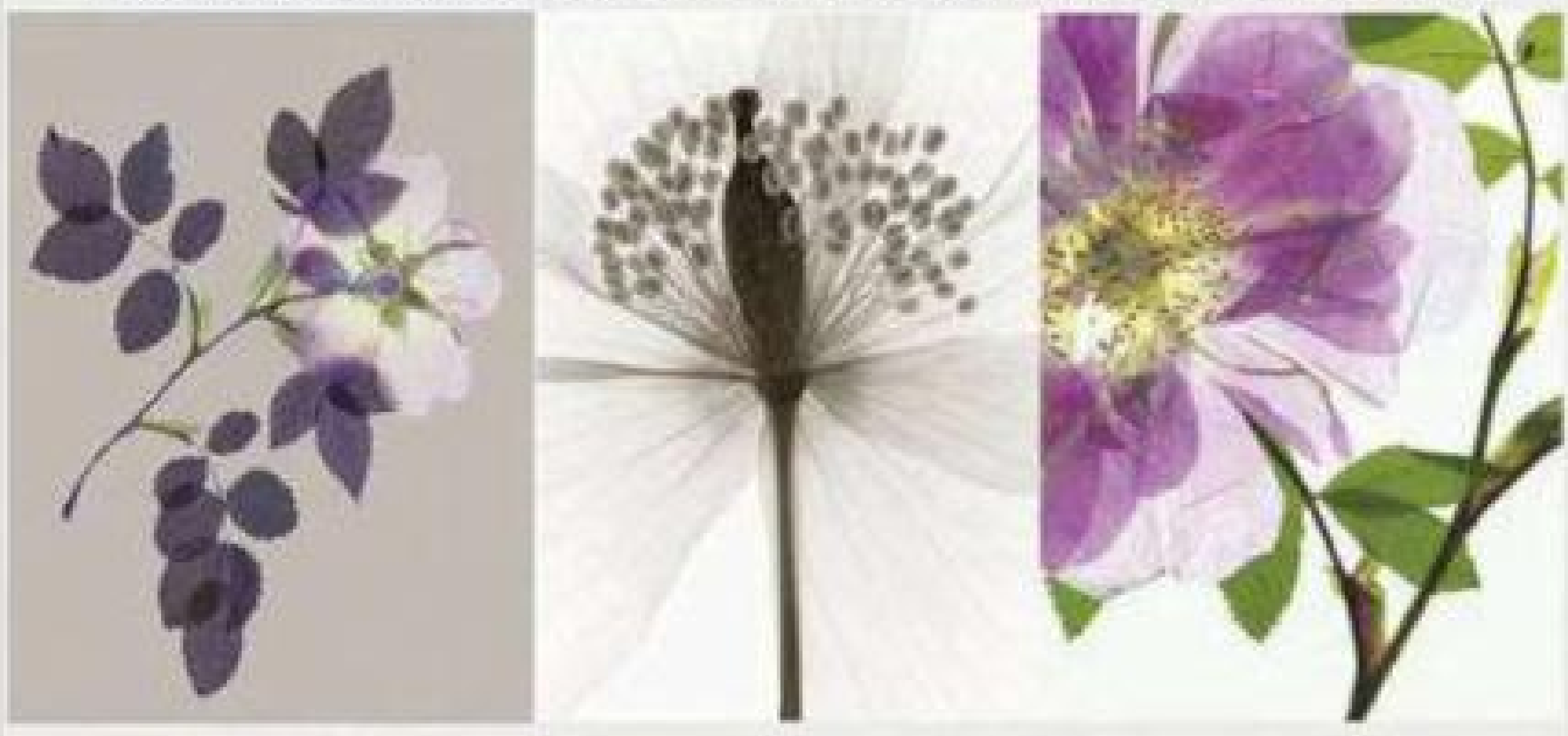

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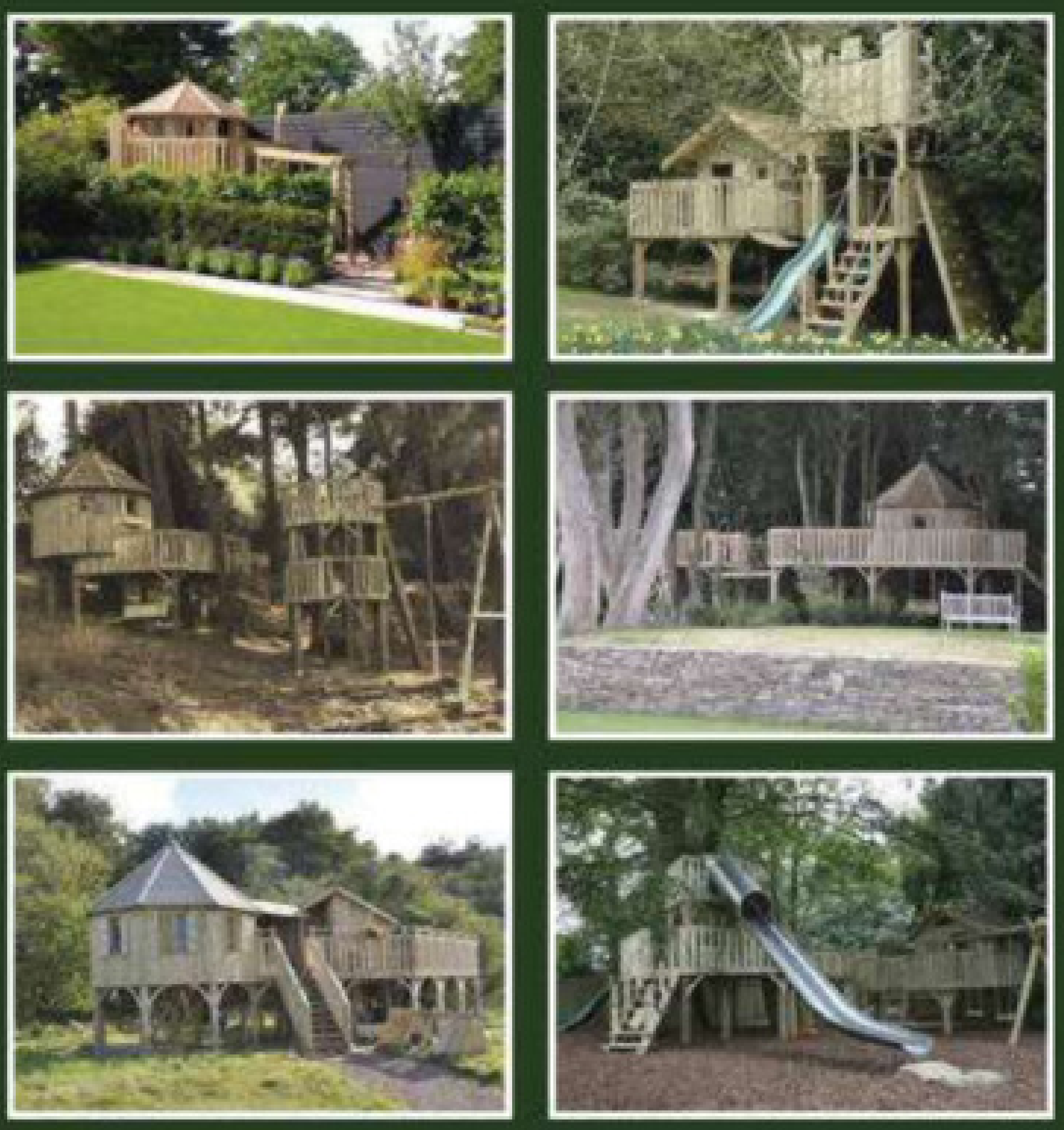

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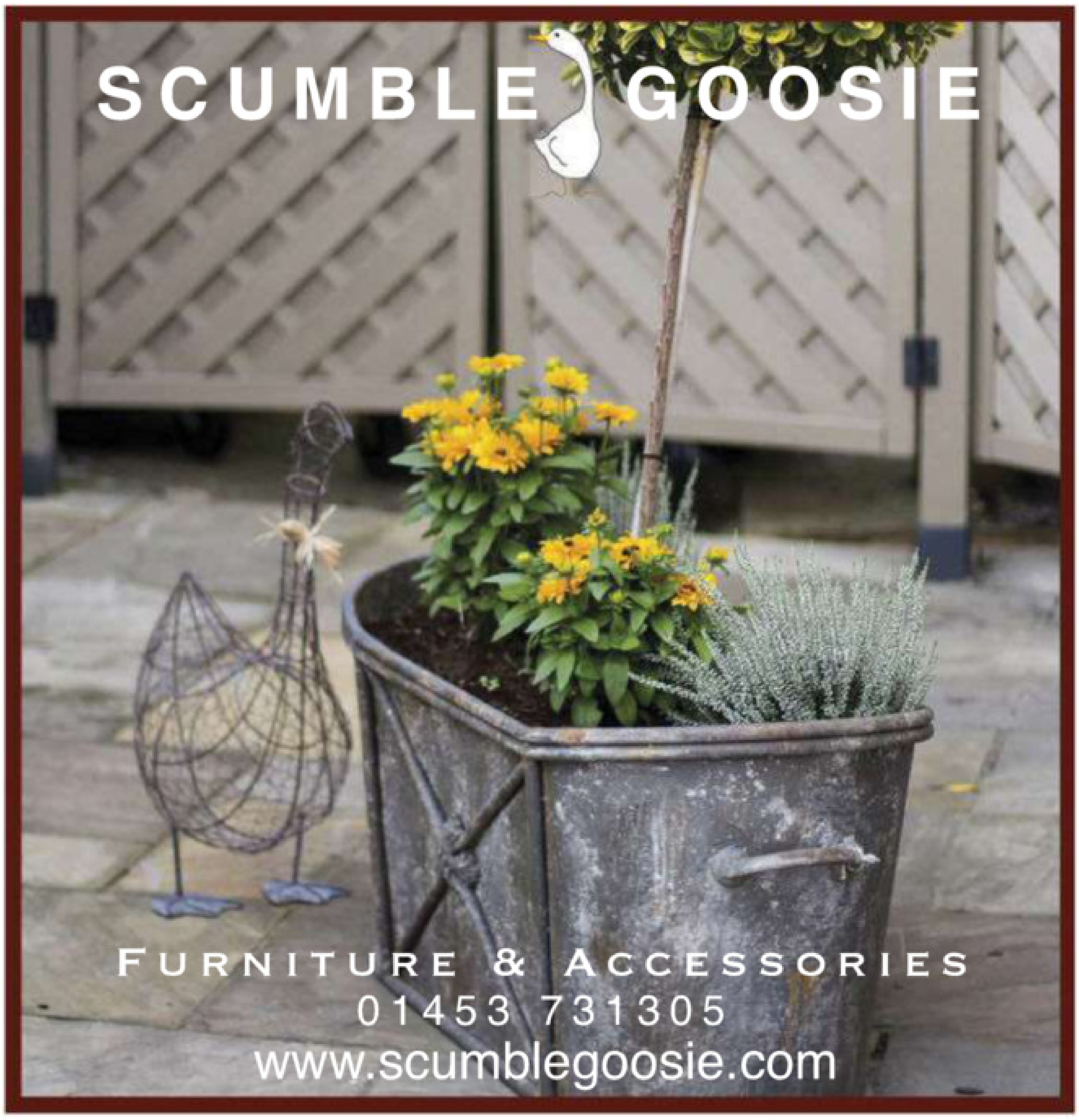

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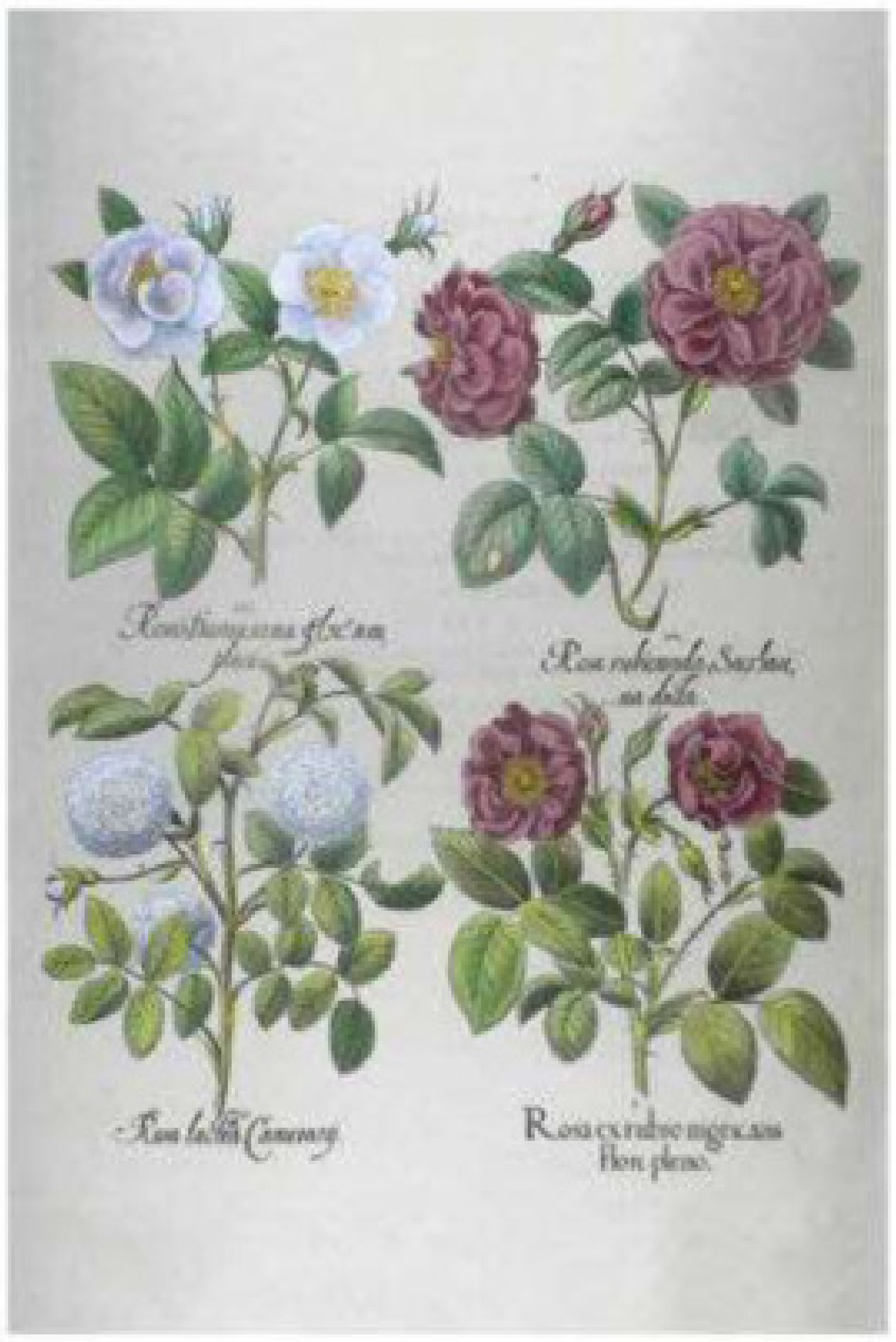

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Autumn in colour

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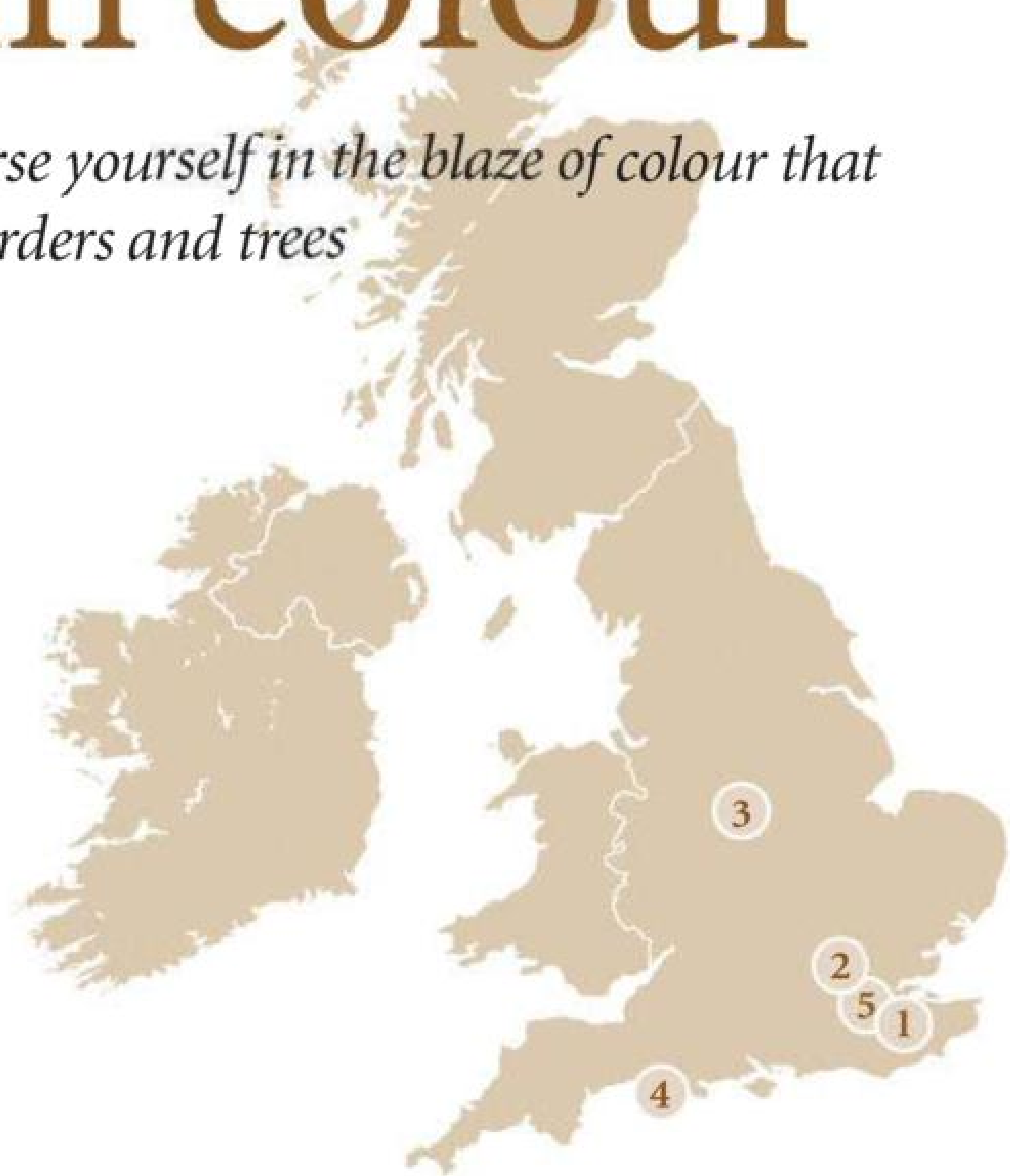

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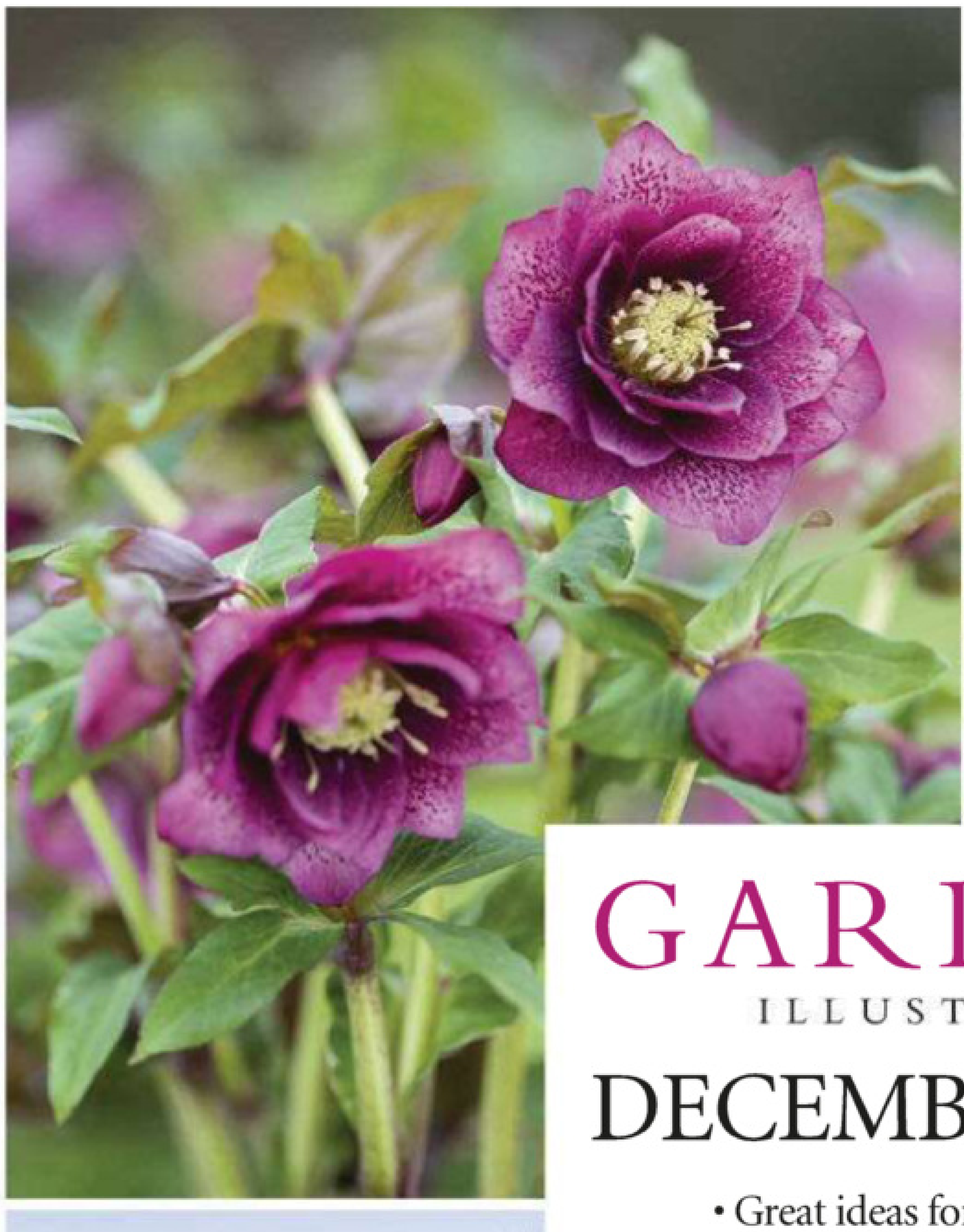

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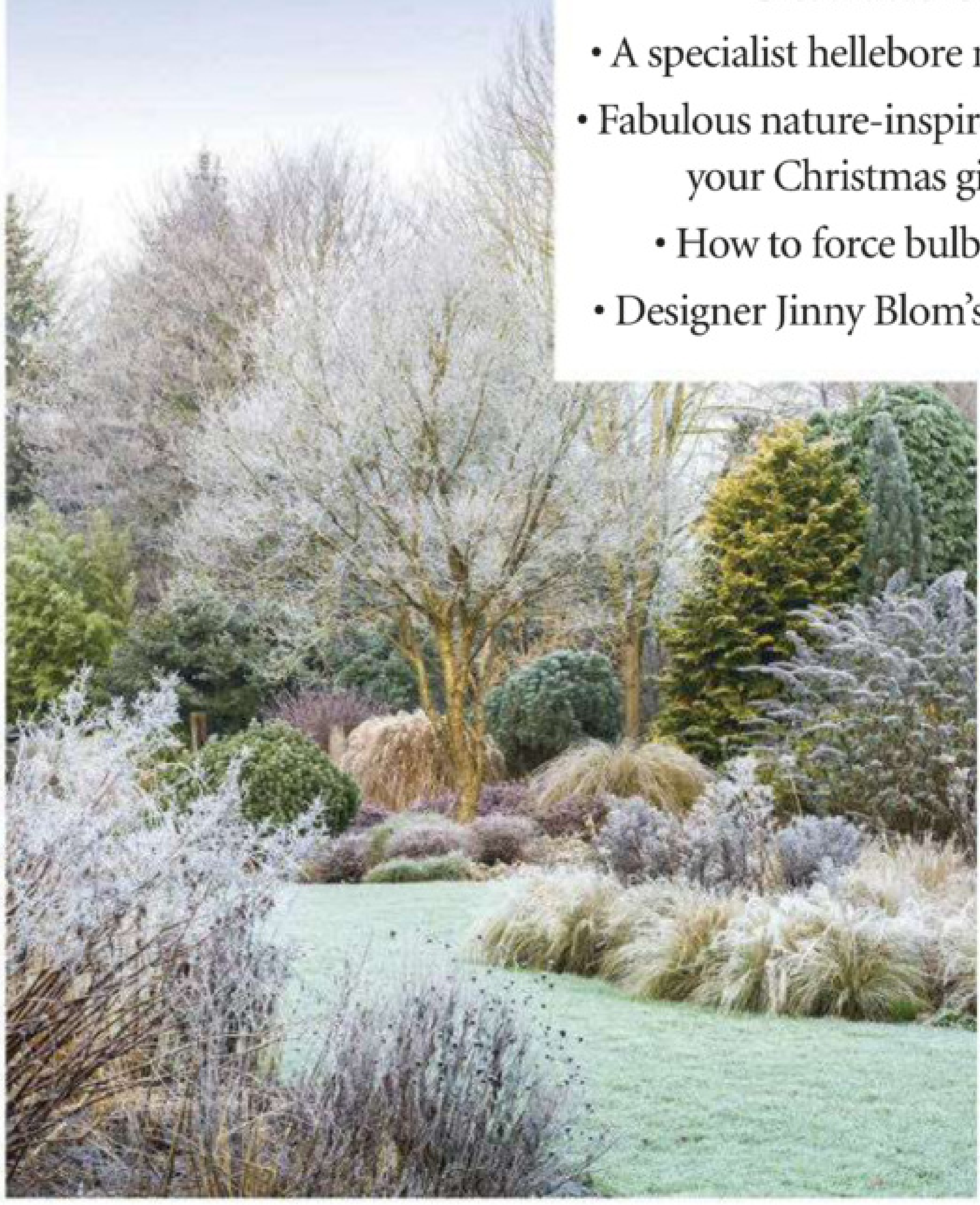

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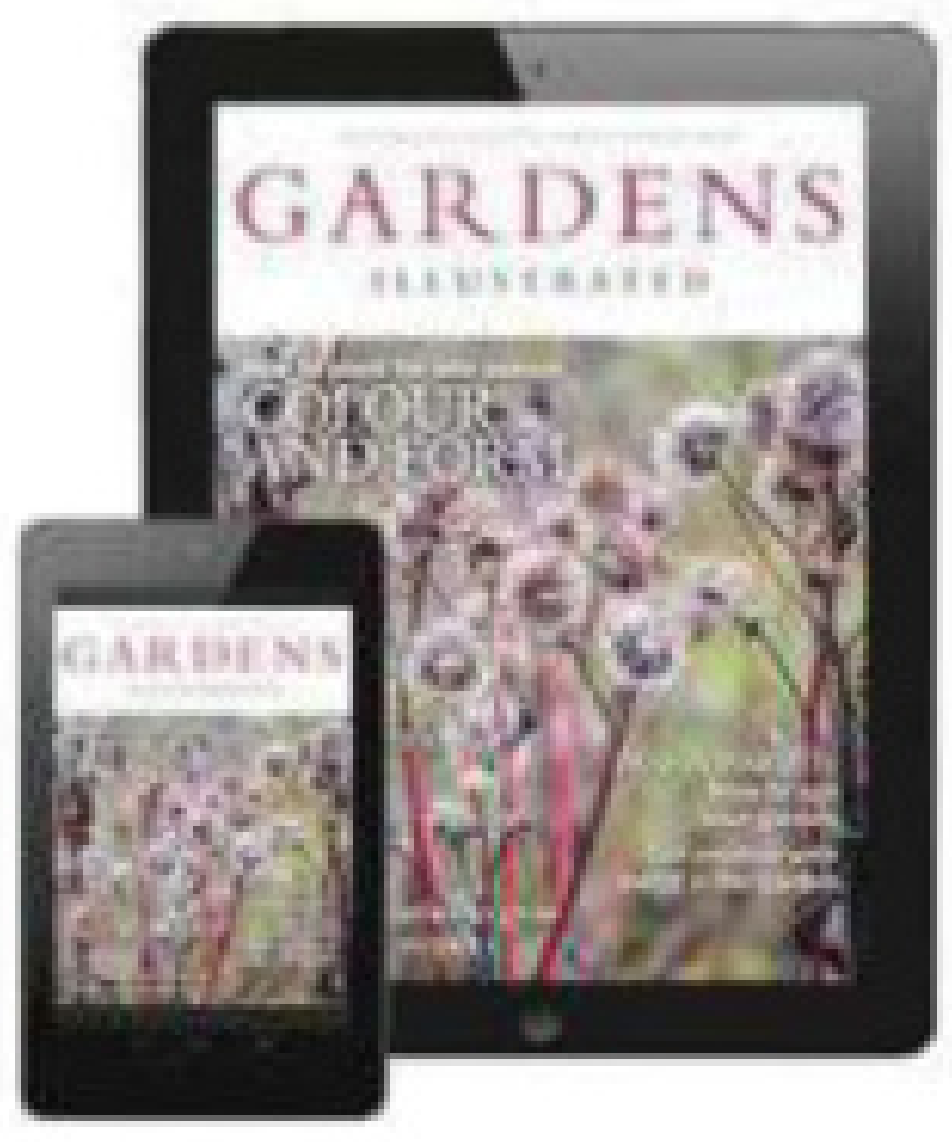

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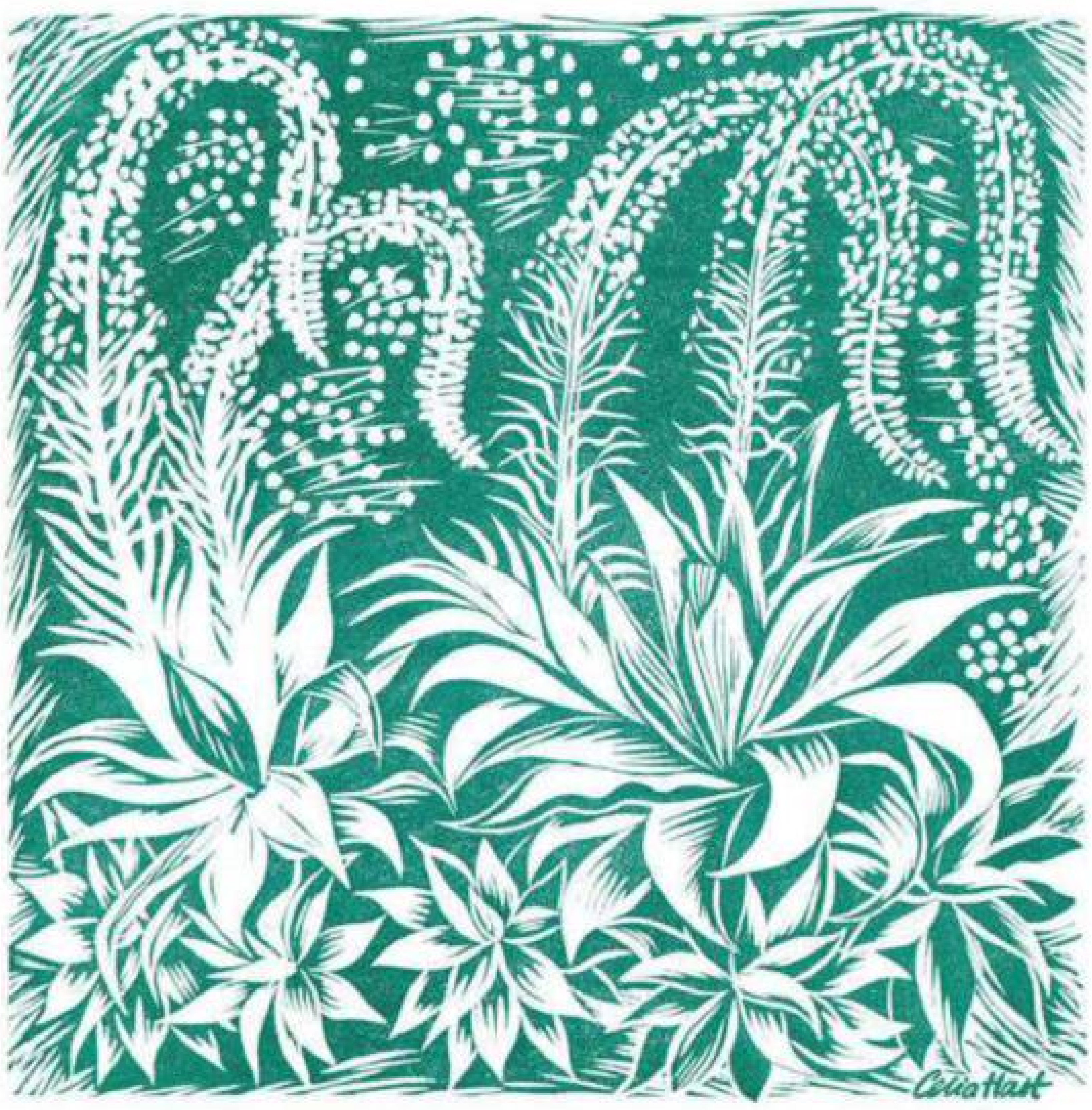
Swanning around

Frank realises a long-abandoned ambition to possess a slender, swan-necked temptress

WORDS **FRANK RONAN** ILLUSTRATION **CELIA HART**



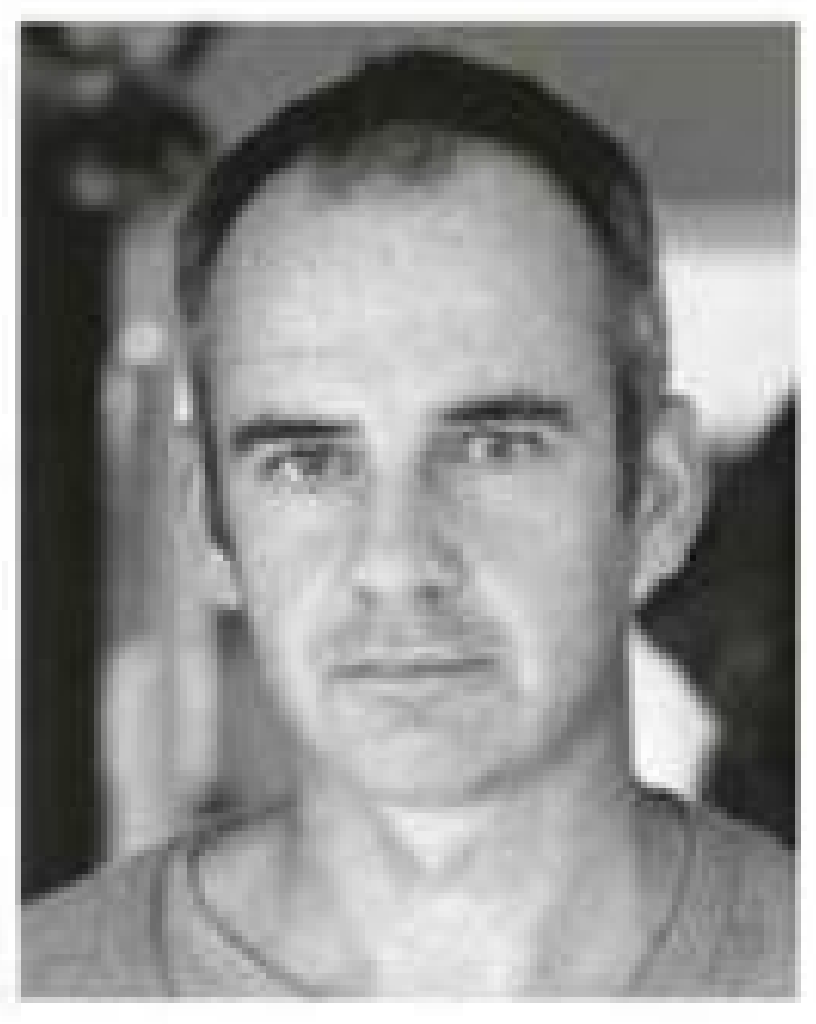
Succulent but slender might describe a state we can only dream of, which alone is a reason to admire the attenuated agave. I first saw it at Kew or, at least, saw it for the first time with a decent camera to hand there which, by recording the thrill, made it the most potent memory, possibly obliterating earlier, unrecorded sightings. Images have a bizarre knack of becoming truths above other truths.

Five, possibly successive, years followed when it was acquired and lost to the English winter. It wouldn't suffer to live in either the house or the greenhouse. Other agaves shrivelled a little and waited for spring, but the slender one, with operatic pathos and in spite of all extolments of her tiny hand, would sicken and die before my eyes, not meant for that world.

> *It will give all to throw up a spike of white flowers with a curvature that swan's imitate for courtship display*

It was the main thing that made me envious, on my first trip to LA, that entire beds could be filled with nothing but *Agave attenuata*. It grew in ditches by the roadside and on sand dunes by the sea. It existed, albeit meanly, on the premises of people who had managed to kill all other living things (not counting themselves, but perhaps they didn't qualify). I came away adding it to a list of the great injustices of life and determined that I would never torture myself by trying to grow it again.

Perhaps that is why I didn't rush to plant any when we arrived to live here. And then when something is so common that you see it in quantity driving down any street you soon cease to think of it as desirable. I was a little bowled over, the first winter, on seeing them flower: giant croziers towering overhead, and thought that perhaps we might get a few. Our friend Helena offered cuttings of hers and we said yes of course we'd love to and almost certainly would someday. But it was not a day that year.



Frank Ronan is a novelist who gardens in both the UK and USA.

For those to whom the name conjures no image, or for those who are so used to seeing it that they see nothing, I should point out that *Agave attenuata* is a plant like no other; certainly like no other agave. The leaves, which are a pale and slightly glaucous green, peel back from a perfect and slender cone, on which the next leaf makes an elegant diagonal. Everything about it is smooth and clean and proper. Eventually the rosette will reach four feet or so across on a trunk of about the same length, which can be louchely recumbent. At that point it will give all to throw up a spike of white flowers with a curvature that swan's imitate for courtship display (more improbable to think it was the other way round).

There was a difficult triangle of ground by a new path that needed a quick fix, and we finally took the truck to Carpinteria to see what Helena was offering. We knew her garden and her abundant attenuatas already, and on the way there I was trying to work out from where we could most tactfully extract a few heads without leaving scars in the landscape. With insane generosity she pointed at all the biggest and declared that they were the ones she wanted rid of. In twenty minutes the bed of the truck was crammed, and five later the back seat filled.

You can look down your nose at instant gardening, and I do, but filling an entire bed with mature plants in half an afternoon is the kind of kick you don't mind having once in a while. They suffered a little from sunburn, as they had come from slightly more shade than they have now, but so far, so good, and I find myself in possession of a thing I once dreamt of and gave up as unobtainable. Better yet was the discovery that there is a very nice blue form, and a delectable variegated one. It would be tragic to resist having them all. □

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